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# Qualitative Assessment Of A Culture Within A Small School Environment

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**Qualitative Assessment of a Culture Within a Small School Environment**

**BY**

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**Submitted in a Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education  
Seton Hall University**

**2002**

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father for all the love and support they have given me throughout my life but especially in completing this daunting task. I dedicate this dissertation to my niece Kelsey who I love dearly, am so proud of, and who has given me far more than she can ever realize. I also dedicate this to RJ who gave me silent encouragement when no one else was around. I dedicate this dissertation to my husband Rick who uncomplainingly picked up all the pieces of our lives while I gave this my all. I love you.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

The old adage "bigger is better" certainly applies to the high school of today. The American Educator (winter 2000-2001) recently published a listing of the 25 high schools in America having the largest enrollment. Topping the list was a high school in Los Angeles, California with an enrollment of 5,160 students. Half way down is listed a high school in Elizabeth, New Jersey that houses 4,510 students. At the end of the list is a high school located in Miami, Florida with 4,146 students.

According to Kathleen Cotton (1996a), Walberg & Howley have indicated that the population of America's high schools has grown steadily between the years 1940 -

1990. The total number of elementary and secondary schools declined 69 percent from approximately 200,000 to 62,037 despite a 70 percent increase in the United States' population during these years 1994. Walberg further states that school districts have also declined in number and increased in size during this same period. In 1940, 117,108 school districts existed. They have decreased by 87 percent to 15, 367. With this rise of our high school's population, we see a rise in violence and crime as well. According to the study *Indicators of School Crime and Safety* (Klonsky, 2000), only 3.9% of high schools with 500 students or less reported serious violent incidents compared with 32.9% of high schools over 1,000 students.

This growth in the number of students in today's high schools can be traced back to certain periods in our history. Smith and De Young (1998) cite the 1957 launching of the Soviet satellite Sputnik and the belief that catching up with the Russians required bigger schools that would produce more scientists and mathematicians. They also indicate that the order for schools to comply with desegregation and special entitlement programs resulted in district mergers. According to Cotton (1996a), Pittman and Haughwout; Stockard and Mayberry; Walberg, and Williams cite that James Conant's book The American High School Today published in 1959, greatly accelerated the school consolidation movement. Conant's premise was that in order to be cost effective and to offer a large and varied curriculum, a high school had to have at least 100 students in its graduating class. Conant claimed that the small high school was the number-one problem in education, and that its elimination should be a top priority. Conant's call has been taken up by administrator's who in their zeal to demonstrate their commitment to the forces of science, progress, and modernization by seeking to make schooling efficient, a

notion importantly borrowed from the private sector have created the largest secondary schools ever in existence according to Smith and DeYoung (1998).

Schoggen and Schoggen (1998) stated that this push for school and district consolidation continues into the present. This would lead one to believe that larger high schools are achieving beyond expectations. If this is so, then we should see high-test scores, students that come to school and graduate age appropriate in grade twelve, and places where one feels safe to spend 180 days out of the year.

Sadly the opposite is true. Test scores remain low, students are absent and/or slip by unnoticed until they drop out, and most recently the violence in large high schools is on the rise. Large high schools experience more disorder than small high schools. The climate in large high schools is such that students are easily lost in the shuffle and left to their own activities. Teachers do not learn the names of the students they teach until well into the school year, let alone know everyone in the school. According to Cotton (1996a), Gottfredson indicated that large schools appear to promote negative teacher and student perceptions of school administration as well as low staff and student morale. Administrators are kept locked up in their office with paperwork and phone calls. Though readily available, only a handful of students participate in extra-curricular activities. Students in large high schools are more polarized, with a group of active participants at one end of the continuum and a large group who did not participate in any extracurricular activities at the other (Cotton, 1996b). Students and teachers feel no real attachment to their school.

### The Problem

According to Lee and Smith, over the last decade or so, many important social critics such as Boyer andSizer, describe the secondary school as so fundamentally linked to the success of our economic and political future that its failure would jeopardize the future of the nation itself. According to Clinchy (1998), the report *A Nation at Risk* published in 1983, accused the nation's public school system of "being awash in a rising tide of mediocrity". This "mediocrity" would impose the threat warned of by Boyer andSizer.

In the past few years we have seen fatal shootings at the 1,900-student Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, another at a school near Atlanta, Georgia, and far too many more that now threaten the future of our nation. The bigger the school, the more increased chance of a Littleton-type incident occurring (Klonsky, 2000). According to a study by the Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2000), a 1974 Presidential panel determined that "in a school larger than 500 students, teachers no longer know the names of students they do not teach, and the principal no longer knows students by name. At 1,000 students, the principal becomes unable to distinguish whether a particular young person belongs to a school."

There have been many attempts at reform and restructuring of our high schools. Some of these efforts have been to create magnet schools that seemingly have removed the best and brightest from the general public school population. The creation of education standards has left us with attempting to fit all students in the same norm. States have initiated standardized testing for target grades such as four, eight, and eleven. This



has led to "teaching to the test" in which teachers spend the entire school year preparing students to successfully pass a standardized test while neglecting much of the curriculum. In most cases these reforms have not been successful in curbing the increase of violence, low-test scores, high student dropout rate, and the intolerable building conditions in which students come to learn and teachers to teach. In fact, according to the *Indicators of School Crime and Safety* (Klonsky, 2000), incidents of violence and crime increase dramatically in schools with 1,000 or more students as compared to those of 500 or less. Still the average high school in the United States today holds between 2500-5000 students and the push for school and district consolidation continues (Schoggen & Schoggen 1998).

This research assessed the culture in a small high school (high schools that house 500 students or less) environment. The idea of small high schools is one type of school reform being tried by a courageous few. In fact former vice-president Al Gore gave in a speech in 1999 while running to become president offered this same idea: smaller schools. According to Solomon (1999), he stated, "We've done some things wrong in education, and here's one of them: herding all students in a 2.5-square-mile area into crowded, factory-style high schools." Solomon continued with, as more concrete research becomes available, the smaller school will become "an idea that's been around and whose time has come". (p. 1)

Students need to feel like they are individuals with teachers and administrators who know and care for them. They need the curricular, extra-curricular, and leadership opportunities that a small school can offer instead of being thrust into a huge school where students are hardly known at all. The Bank Street College of Education 2000, as

well as authors such as MaryAnne Wayid (1998) and Thomas Sergiovanni (1996), recommends that high schools be thought of as communities where teachers and staff develop relationships that enable them to really get to know each other. Students and teachers feel safe in such schools. Meaningful and challenging learning can occur. According to Wayid (1998), education is founded on the development of the individual; the size of classes and the size of the building should be small enough to allow the individual to count

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of principals and teachers of the culture within a small school environment. The amount of violence, high student dropout rate, low overall achievement, and poor student and teacher morale seen in high schools prompted this researcher to conduct this study.

### Research Questions

1. Does the culture of a school, particularly a small high school, contribute to students getting to know each other and having the personal contact with their teachers that research tells us is so important?
2. Does the culture of a small high school help students reach higher academic success?

3. Does the culture of a small high school help prevent violence and crime that we read about in larger schools?
4. Does the culture of a small high school help reduce absenteeism by students and teachers alike as well as student drop out rate?
5. Do teachers perform better in small high schools?

#### Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in terms of its scope and research design.

The results were limited to professionals in a small number of Diocesan Catholic High Schools in the state of New Jersey and Rhode Island. The research was restricted in the administrators and teachers perceptions of school culture.

#### Significance of the Study

This study was significant for high school level administrators, curriculum coordinators, teachers, and guidance personnel. It was also significant for school board members, parents, and all those who are interested in the learning and safety of the high school students entrusted to their care. It was significant in that it will shed new light on research about small high schools.

This study was significant in that it represented a total body of research completed in a qualitative manner. The intent of this study was not to compare small high schools with larger ones. However, the mention of large high school was almost impossible to

avoid since much of the research that has been done in the past has been derived from quantitative studies stemming directly from large schools. There is not enough known about culture in a small school environment so a more discovery-approach was being used. Through in-depth interviews with a limited number of respondents (9), a much deeper meaning of culture in a small school environment developed. The researcher learned the perceptions about the culture of a small school environment from the participants themselves. The answers given by the respondents were given in the context of the culture being studied.

The results of this dissertation allowed administrators and educators to better understand the culture of a small school environment. It encouraged them to proceed with school reform with the benefits of small high schools in mind.

Large schools generally offer more basic courses in what some have called a "shopping mall curriculum." Robert Zais (1979) describes the modern school as "a place where mini-courses proliferate at a breath-taking rate to meet the specific individual needs and interests of the students. The result is a kind of disjointed clutter of specialized subjects which often operates to impede, rather than to foster education." (p. 396) The trade-off for wider course fare has been a sacrifice of coherence, intimacy, security, student choice, and teacher autonomy, all of which are vital to successful learning, according to Klonsky, (2000b). This study was important because it showed how small high schools can better address these problems.

### Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of terms used in this study.

Catholic High School: In this study, the term Diocesan Catholic High School referred to a private high school that structures its beliefs around those of the Roman Catholic Church.

Climate: In this study, climate was defined as a combination of beliefs, values, and attitudes shared by all students, teachers, administrators, and all others who play an important role in the school (Sweeney, 1988).

Community: In this study, community referred to the collections of individuals who are bonded together by natural will and who are together bound to a set of shared ideas and ideals. This bonding is tight enough to transform them from a collection of "I's" into a collective "we" (Sergiovanni, 1996).

Culture: In this study, culture referred to the interactions of the students, the teachers, and the principal of a school. According to Goodlad (1975), culture is the interactions of these people, the language they use, the traditions they uphold, and the beliefs to which they subscribe.

Large High School: In this study, a large high school was defined as a high school of grades 9-12, with more than 500 students (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

School Climate: In this study, school climate was defined as a combination of beliefs, values, and attitudes shared by all students, teachers, and administrators and all others who play an important role in the school (Sweeney, 1998).

School-within-a-school: In this study, the term "school-within-a-school" made reference to a high school that has been divided into smaller schools that are located in the same

building This approach establishes within a school a smaller educational unit with a separate educational program; it's own staff and students, and its own budget (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Small High School: In this study, a small high school was defined as a high school of grades 9-12, with no more than 500 students (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELEVANT RESEARCH AND LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter represented a review of the literature and research relevant to the topic of this study. It was presented in the following sections. First, a background was given as to the concept of culture. The second section revealed how a positive climate plays an important part in the culture of a small school environment. In the next section the relationship between students and teachers of small schools was discussed. The third section examined the academic success of students within a small school culture. The next section discussed whether or not culture, particularly in small schools, affects teacher performance. An exploration of the relationship of culture to that of student absenteeism and dropout rates followed. The chapter closed with a summary.

### School Culture

John Goodlad, (1975) defined culture as the interactions of the students, the teachers, and the principal of a school. According to Goodlad (1975), the interactions of these people, the language they use, the traditions they uphold, the beliefs to which they subscribe, and so forth, make up the culture of a school. "The heart and soul of school culture is what people believe, the assumptions they make about how schools work, and what they consider to be true and real" (Sergiovanni, 1996, p. 3). This in turn begins to create a "theory of acceptability" that lets people know how they should behave. The culture of a school begins to form as it articulates and implements what is acceptable: the values and assumptions found in its vision. The members of the school learn what those values mean as they see them enacted throughout the school. All members of the school begin to take on these values. School culture lets the members of the school know what is normal, what is accepted, and what is not.

It is becoming more and more difficult to find schools that have defined cultures and act within them. In recent years student subcultures such as patterns of dress, speech habits, and rituals unique to adolescents becoming adults at each grade level have become greater and greater. They overshadow the overall school culture. The adults in the schools mean less and less in the lives of the students they are there to guide. More and more, students look to themselves to meet their needs, to feel connected, to belong, and to find meaning. As these subcultures tighten, norms that were once harmless can be replaced by norms that are harmful and often destructive. In many cases, no adult in the school is aware of these negative norms until negative incidents occur.



Small schools embrace their culture. Adults and students are quick to see behavior that is alien to their school. They develop a community in which there is a unique value system and a unique way of life.

There is a shared consensus of ideas that are modeled (Sergiovanni, 1996). The community within this culture helps others to live out these ideas and to develop an acceptable way of behavior, in and out of school. Small schools can, by their small numbers, provide an atmosphere in which the values of the culture can be felt and seen on a daily basis. It can be seen by the interactions of the students, teachers, and administration.

Small schools have a clear vision that focuses everyone on maintaining this culture. The vision states the school's beliefs about teaching and learning and how they occur. According to Aness (1998), the vision is the architecture of ideas that guides the design and development of the school. It speaks of the culture, the values, and what the school believes to be important. The vision states how these values and beliefs will be enacted. It lets the outside world know what the vision of the school is. It tells parents and students what they will be getting while attending the school. The vision communicates the culture. Aness further states that the implementation of this vision is seen through course offerings, the schedule, the student class assignments, advisories, administrative procedures, and mechanisms for professional development. These constitute a structure for safety, stability, order, and teaching and learning. They constitute the culture.

### School Climate

Small schools are an example of schools that have an "open climate". Behavior by the members of the organization is acceptable and agreed on by all its' members. The model of an open school climate is portrayed as an energetic, lively organization which is moving toward its goals while simultaneously providing satisfaction for the group members' social needs. Satisfaction seems to be obtained easily and almost effortlessly. The basic characteristic of an open climate is the "authenticity" of behavior that occurs throughout the organization. Small schools exhibit such a climate. They are healthy schools. Hoy & Sabo (1998) cite that a healthy school is one where participants want to be rather than forced to be.

The climate of a small school can almost be described as "family like". It is highly supportive. According to Bank Street College of Education (2000), Pelzel indicates that the small school provides an atmosphere that places significant value on each student involved in the school. Students are less likely to fall through the cracks. According to Ted Sizer (1985), a high school teacher should have direct responsibility for fewer than a hundred students, preferably fewer than eighty. A small school facilitates doing things in much the same way as that of a family. The family encourages warm, trusting relationships among administrators, teachers, and students. According to Gottfredson (1985), students in smaller schools fight less, feel safer, come to school more frequently, and report being more attached to their school. It is a healthy school.

Recent research has identified numerous practices and characteristics associated with effective schools (Fried, 1982). High on the list is school culture and within this culture a school climate that is orderly, serious, safe, and attractive. Students in small

schools commit fewer infractions, major or minor, says Mary Raywid, a professor emerita at Hofstra University. There is overwhelming evidence that violence is much less likely to occur in small schools than in large ones. Students choose to stay in a small school because it makes them feel comfortable and safe. They are less likely to engage in violent physical altercations. In fact, not surprisingly, students behave better in schools where they are known. It is in large schools, where alienation often goes hand in hand with anonymity, that danger comes, cite Raywid & Oshiyama (2000). The Consortium on Chicago School Research, Bryk, Easton, Gladden. Kochanek & Luppescu (1999), found "it easier to maintain personal interaction and informal exchange between participants" and that adversarial politics are less likely to be found. "These results imply that small school size minimizes the likelihood of sustained conflict and can facilitate the emergence of strong democracy" (p. 12). According to Sergiovanni (1996), schools should be defined as small collections of people who are committed to each other and who are connected to similar values and ideas.

A study conducted by Maeroff (1998), found that students come to school lacking a Sense of Connectedness. According to Maeroff (1998), students feel alienated and do not have a sense of belonging to their community, neighborhood, or school. Students will exhibit a sense of belonging in a small school. There is no place to hide in a small school. Many, if not most, are involved in extra curricular activities, especially sports. Although large schools offer a greater variety of activities, the greater, more varied participation in co curricular activities by students in small schools is the single best-supported finding of the school size research. According to Kathleen Cotton (1996a), Galletti cites that this sense of belonging has been shown to reduce or eliminate students' sense of alienation

that can be found in larger schools, and consequently, positively affects confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of responsibility for self-direction. This self-esteem can be seen in the roles that students fill. It creates a sense of belonging and reminds the student of their responsibility to the school. Cotton continues on to say that Novotney indicates that everyone must participate, and because of the small numbers, every student has more leadership opportunities. Students who never participated in school activities before find themselves as president of the student council, editor of the yearbook, or president of their favorite club. A small school offers them the sense of being comfortable and in knowing that they belong to a group in a supportive environment. "In a small school, you can be somebody", says education researcher Kathleen Cotton (1996a). "To be known and acknowledged by other human beings is essential to human psychological well-being and to learning" (p. 9).

In small schools, a strong administration that focuses on instruction enhances climate. The administrator functions as the instructional leader. There is a consensus on teacher objectives and priorities are assigned to those objectives. High expectations are clearly communicated to the students. Instructional activities absorb most of the day. There is an evaluation process that involves student progress, the staff, and the school itself. According to Clinchy (1998), students succeed in a climate of high standards (set by the school itself) yet are small enough so that teachers and students know each other well, that have authority and resources for teaching and learning, and that are accountable for results. The small school provides an atmosphere that places significant value on each student involved in the school. According to Bank Street College of Education (2000), a study conducted by the American Legislative Exchange Council, found that school size,

not classroom size was the key in the performance of students. Children do better in places where the principal knows the name of each student.

Small schools can deal with disciplinary problems in ways that larger schools cannot. They can suggest alternate ways for kids to deal with anger and think about preferable solutions. They attend to problems earlier because they know about them sooner. Parents, teachers, and students are involved in the attempt to understand the problem. The Bank Street College of Education (2000) cites that through community, personal relationships, and expectations of civility, students begin to internalize values of care and respect and model a critical and engaged citizenship. "Large size and fragmented human contact complicate the management of schools, which elevates the importance of formal rules to regulate behavior. The environment in comprehensive schools is therefore less human" (Lee and Smith 1994, p. 3).

According to a study by Aness, (1998), when students in small schools are asked why they do not fight they simply answer, because we know each other. Schools that are able to develop personal relationships have been more successful in creating a safe, secure, school environment. According to Meier (1998), small schools offer what metal detectors and guards cannot: the safety and security of being where you are known well by people who care for you.

A study done by Bryk, Lee, & Holland, (1993) found that the absence of disruption is a general characteristic of classroom life within small schools. Fewer than 5 percent of the teachers reported any of the following problems: students fights in class, students under the influence of alcohol or drugs, physical or verbal abuse of students, students ridiculing other students, and excessive absences or tardiness. The study went on

to say that the absence of disruptive behavior is further complemented by student attitudes in general. The majority of students were very positive about their school and teachers. The majority expressed a strong interest in school and agreed that the school had a good reputation in the community.

Research indicates a direct correlation between small school structure and the reduction, if not the elimination of violent and disruptive student behavior. It is where students attend school where anonymity is the usual, not the unusual, that conflicts arise. According to Meier (1998), students in small schools develop a strong sense of place and accountability.

#### Relationship of Student and Teacher

In a study on small schools, Bank Street College of Education (2000), identified conditions that affected students and teachers. One condition found to be true is *teachers know students well*. In high schools where today's students seem to face an array of personal and emotional problems, it has become almost imperative for teachers to get to know their students' backgrounds, personalities, families, educational histories, and much more in order to educate them. In large schools, this is an almost impossible task. A teacher faced with class sizes of almost 30-35 students, teaching five to six periods a day, cannot possibly know that much about their students. In many cases, teachers cannot even learn all their students' names. Instead, they become an ID number as grades get entered on report cards. In a small school, a teacher can get to know all of their students and backgrounds from which they come. There is an intimate and personal social

relationship among teachers and students. In this same study Bracey indicates that the quality and character of these relationships are important determinants of student learning. Relationships and strong bonds between teachers and students are extended over long periods of time. Every staff member knows each student; the entire school is knowledgeable of each student's needs. In most cases since class sizes are much lower, the teacher can make special provisions for individual needs and talents. Teachers know whether or not you got what you were supposed to get and then how to help you.

There is a greater chance for students to get to interact informally with their teachers. Because of the small numbers, providing individual attention to students is almost automatic. During the change of classes or lunch, students are able to run over to a teacher for an informal chat or ask a forgotten question and still be on time for class. According to Bryk & Driscoll (1988), individuals are involved with one another not merely because they are engaged on the same task, but because they are socially connected as well. Concerns about everyday feelings and the welfare of students are addressed as part of everyday teaching. When this caring is in place, a social cohesion among staff and students results that can enhance the schools' academic mission and norm for instruction, cites Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, & Mitman (1982). It can be expected that teachers come to know many students, not just those they have in class. Students see this as the teachers having an interest in their lives as well as their academic achievements.

Another condition identified in the report was that *teachers have high expectations for the students, which often leads to high expectations in the students themselves*. In a small school close relationships exist and help to raise expectations. The

student senses how much the teachers want them to succeed. The student in turn, tries his/her best to please the teacher and meet their expectations. A 1998 study by Macroff, also found that students come to school without a Sense of Academic Initiative. Students lack a good school work ethic, good study habits, and a high level of self-discipline. According to Bank Street College of Education (2000), communities of support foster high expectations in which these initiatives can be developed. In this community expectations become internalized and potentially, realized.

In a study conducted by Macroff (1998), *Making Life Better for Children in Need*, it was found that small schools, in which adults give more attention to each student, can help to address the fact that so many students come to school lacking in "Social Capital." The study describes a lack of Social Capital when students arrive without *academic initiative*. Students lack a good school work ethic, study habits and self-discipline. Academic success is not perceived as relevant to their future. Students come to school without a *sense of knowing*. Students do not have a sturdy foundation upon which to build success in school. Many students also come to school without a *sense of connectedness*. This is described as students who feel no connection to their school. School has become a place they come to for so many hours a day. Once they leave it is basically forgotten. Many students attend school without a *sense of well-being*. Students carry with them emotional worries and worries about the future which can cause them to develop a negative sense of well-being.

According to Fine & Somerville (1998), in small schools, students are not just faceless names in an attendance book - their personalities, styles of learning, strengths, and needs are known by their teachers. They can develop "Social Capital." Teachers can



work together with small groups of students and create learning and an environment that is best for each student. "In our school, they all know my name and my game. They know I'm the mischievous one - they know what's good and what's bad about me. I like how I experience it; I feel at home" (p. 1).

### Academic Success of Students

Numerous studies have examined the relation between school size and student achievement. These studies seem to show that students in small schools are at least successful if not better than their peers in larger schools. According to Cotton (1996a), one result from these studies is that while large schools offer more advanced courses than do small ones, those offerings appear to have no influence on average levels of student achievement.

Another study conducted by the Bank Street College of Education (2000), found that the relationship between school size and student achievement suggests that students' attachment, persistence, and performance are all stronger in small schools. When examining a range of indicators to assess student achievement, the data from 1997-1999 suggests that students in small schools:

1. have better attendance rates;
2. have significantly lower dropout rates;
3. have higher GPAs;
4. fail fewer courses;
5. have stronger achievement test scores;

6. are less likely to have students repeat a grade than their counterparts.

Students do better in small schools because their teachers are afforded more time to work together on curriculum. They are engaged more in class. Teachers know them. They know their strengths and weaknesses. They are expected to reach high standards. They are exposed to critical thinking strategies and a broad range of strategies employed by their teachers. There are fewer discipline interruptions that can interfere with learning. There is more accountability between students, teachers, and parents.

Kathleen Cotton (1996b), a research specialist with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, reviewed the results of over 100 studies on school size. According to Cotton, student achievement in small schools is at least equal and often superior to achievement in large schools. Cotton continues citing that a large body of research in the affective and social realms overwhelmingly affirms the superiority of small schools. (Indicators used in these studies were grades, test scores, honor roll enrollment, subject-area achievement, higher-order thinking skills, and years of education attained after high school.)

High schools enrolling as few as 100 to 200 students offer base courses in curricular areas such as mathematics and science at rates comparable to high schools enrolling between 1,200 to 1,600 students (Haller, Monk, Bear, Griffith, & Moss, 1990). According to Kathleen Cotton (1996a), Noll cites that even the smallest schools are able to offer core curricula comparable to larger schools. Small schools tend to be more flexible and exercise greater control over the curriculum. Teachers can delve into teaching

strategies like team teaching, integrated curriculum, and multi-age grouping, all which are shown to improve student achievement.

According to Fowler (1992), very small schools may not be able to offer many advanced or specialized courses, but bigness does not guarantee breadth. While researchers have found that there is less incidence of advanced courses in the smallest high schools (Haller et al., 1990), large size is no guarantee that such courses will be offered or that student enrollment in these courses will be high (Monk, 1986).

Extracurricular opportunities in small high schools are less extensive. Small high schools may have fewer clubs, athletic teams, and marching bands. Nevertheless, student participation rates are greater in smaller high schools. There are fewer students therefore more must participate to have the activity succeed. Often students become engaged in more than one activity. Students in smaller settings are involved in a greater diversity of activities (Schoggen & Shoggen, 1998).

A challenge of any school is to get students to participate in their learning and motivate them to meet high standards. Lee, et al. (1995), has found three components common in small high schools that have successfully met this endeavor:

1. student achievement is found strong; course offerings are narrow and academic content is strong;
2. curriculums center on the notion that all students will meet high academic standards and devote considerable effort to academic endeavors;

3. students are engaged in sustained, disciplined, and critical thought through a variety of instructional approaches, such as independent study, project-based learning, and real-world problem solving.

Deborah Meier (1998), director of central Park East Secondary School in East Harlem sees six benefits associated with small school education: (1) feasibility of democratic practices; (2) collective accountability of faculty performance; (3) personal and individualized attention to student needs; (4) safe, orderly learning environments; (5) parental access to school leadership; and (6) connections between adult and student cultures. She feels these features found in small high schools, promote the development of a curriculum that is attentive and responsive to community and student needs.

"Too often superintendents, principals, and teachers wind up functioning as engineers rather than leaders" (Sergiovanni, 1996. p. 45). He goes on to say that "the ultimate purpose of *school* leadership is to transform the school into a moral community. As the principal becomes an instructional leader, schools evolve away from an generic organization and become distinctive communities" (p. 45). John Goodlad (1984) writes "that principals should be expected to serve as instructional leaders who teach pedagogical skills to the teachers, and evaluating teachers' performance" (p. 302). According to Raywid (1998), principals in small schools spend more time in shared decision making with teacher. They are in classrooms more, helping teachers with instructional matters. They have time to make stronger connections with our community partners. In small high schools one will find principals who are effective and function as instructional leaders over long periods of time. They keep the school focused and on

track. Students clearly know what is expected of them and will strive to meet the demand set by all members of the school community.

### Teacher Performance

According to a study conducted by Bank Street College of Education (2000), small schoolteachers are more likely to:

1. report a strong professional community;
2. report being satisfied in small schools;
3. collaborate and learn from colleagues;
4. engage in professional development that they found to be valuable;
5. build coherent educational programs for students across disciplines and grades;
6. have a greater sense of responsibility for students' academic work and ongoing learning;
7. create a focused learning environment for students; and
8. add to and change their instructional repertoire when working with students.

According to Bachus (1992), teachers want to be involved in decision-making. Teachers want to be most involved in decisions that affect discipline, curriculum, parents, expenditures, and class size. This involvement translates into shared-decision making. This is called empowerment. Empowerment often gets translated into shared decision-

making, delegation of authority, teamwork, and site-based management (Hoy & Miskel, 1996). According to Cotton (1996a), Eberts, Kehoe, and Stone indicate that when school's programs like those found in small schools, are well-planned and clear, that the teachers in the school work well together, that the administrators keep the teachers well-informed, and that conflicts among individuals are identified, faced and not allowed to fester. According to Gregory (1992), giving control of schools back to teachers is central to the general improvement of the conditions of teaching. Schools that do not work for teachers have little chance of working for students. Teachers in small schools are more likely to influence the structure and direction of their school. (Bank Street College of Education, 2000). Gregory (1992) further cites that the negative effects of having more teachers are felt before the negative effects of having more students. Staff must be small enough to be able to problem-solve together. They reach decisions together.

Small schools have an effect on teachers' levels of satisfaction and efficacy. Teachers feel more satisfied and effective. Two surveys and two case studies found a positive relationship between smaller school size and higher staff morale, higher levels of satisfaction, and higher levels of teacher enjoyment. (Bryk & Driscoll 1988; Gottfredson, 1985; Larson, 1991; Oxley, 1989). A case study of three schools that increased and decreased in size during the year of the study found that staff morale tended to decline in schools that grew in size and increased in schools that became smaller (Gottfredson, 1985).

Teachers' satisfaction comes from improved relationships with students and support from their colleagues. "We really help kids here....I have a sense of being needed and accomplishing something important" (Foley & McConnaughty, 1982, p. 124).

Teachers reach out to their colleagues to compare findings and experiences. They get to meet as a group or department much more than other larger schools. Small schools are able to resurrect and positively transform the enthusiasm of teachers. "I'm back! I was burned out and now I'm revived" (Fine, 1994, p. 124) Teachers feel that their lives and work have real meaning.

In small schools, teachers become the center of classroom practice. They are responsible for the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment of their students. Teachers in small schools are open to change and seeking new ideas. According to Bank Street College of Education (2000), Ayers, Klonsky, & Lyon confirms that teachers teach better in small schools, not that better teachers select small schools as places to work. It is because they are not treated as mindless, obedient people. Instead they are seen as people of courage and initiative, inventors and creators, thinkers and doers who are accountable to the community for their actions and outcomes. According to Clinchy (2000), teachers are far removed from the factory model of education where they cannot be trusted to take leadership role in deciding what students should know and be able to do and are regarded as merely the conveyors of already prescribed knowledge. In small schools teachers are visible. They are not afraid. They are involved in the day-to-day decision-making process of the school.

In small schools teachers can benefit from each other's ideas and support. They use each other as resources. They will sit down together and talk about how to deal with students' problem since everyone knows all of the students in the school. They can draw on each other's strengths and hold students accountable to the same behavioral standards across all their classes (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

According to Bank Street College of Education (2000), The Consortium on Chicago Research Survey indicates that high school teachers report that their professional development experiences had been sustained and focused, that they included opportunities to think carefully about, try, and evaluate new ideas, and that these new strategies helped address the needs of the students in their classrooms. They were allowed to pursue professional development both in and outside of school. There is a different approach to professional development in small schools. It places more emphasis on the teachers' interests rather than a smorgasbord of unrelated workshops. This allows teachers to grow in their area of expertise and feel renewed in their work.

"There is no substitute for an experienced, caring, and diverse faculty. In order to thrive a school community requires a critical mass of devoted veteran teachers" (Clinchy, 2000, p. 27). In small school when one teacher leaves everyone feels it. There usually are no extra teachers to take over the duties of the one who leaves. Teachers in small school have that sense of feeling secure and satisfied.

#### Student Absenteeism and Dropout Rate

Research finds that student absenteeism is substantially lower in schools that are communally organized (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988). Not only do students in smaller schools have higher attendance rates than those in larger schools, but also students who change from large schools to small schools generally show improvements in attendance. For instance, students attending small schools on average attended four or five more days of school per semester than students attending the average high school (Bank Street College



of Education, 2000). Research done by The Cross City Campaign has shown that size is one factor that substantially affects students' persistence, achievement, and levels of engagement. Smaller size has a positive effect on school's social environment and students' sense of attachment to the school. Through these factors small schools reduce absenteeism and dropout rates. According to Cotton (1996a) Fine, LeCompt & Dworkin, Lee et al., & Wehlage et al., indicate that qualitative studies have also shown that positive social relationships can create powerful incentives for students to come to school, even those who report that school work is difficult and expectations are hard to meet. Students are more likely to attend regularly when they get along with school adults and when they feel personally expected to come to school every day and are missed when they do not (McPartland & Jordon, 2001).

A Philadelphia study of 20,000 students concluded that high school students in small schools were more likely than those in large ones to pass major subjects and progress towards graduation (McMullan, Sipe, & Wolf, 1994). School organization is one key. Raywid (1998) cites that the way schools are put together clearly affects student achievement, and affects school attendance patterns and dropout rates. According to Cotton (1996b) Whelage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, and Fernandez, indicate that case studies suggest that small schools are more likely to promote the engagement of both students and staff in positive relationships that in turn is seen as an effective dropout prevention tool. These same researchers have assessed several effective programs seen to be successful at targeting students at risk of dropping out. These programs were found to have the following commonalities, all of which can be found in small high schools:

1. A non-threatening environment for learning;

2. A caring and committed staff who accepted a personal responsibility for student success;
3. A school culture that encouraged staff risk-taking, self-governance, and professional collegiality;
4. A school structure that provided for a low student-teacher ratio and small size to promote student engagement.

According to Rumberger (2000), dropping out of school is not simply a result of academic failure, but rather often results from both social and academic problems in school. It is clear that students who suffer from isolation and threats from peers do not feel supported and have more of a tendency to dropout, cites DeLuca & Rosenbaum (2001). Social interactions are an important part in academic outcomes. According to Burkham & Lee (2001), students are less likely to drop out of school where the average relationships between teachers and students (as perceived by the student) are most important. Adults who work in small schools have the ability to consciously alter how they interact with their students. Students stay in school when social relationships are positive. According to Cotton (1996b) Fetler, Lee & Loeb,; Pittman & Haughwout, cite that the better climate (lower crime rates, higher participation rates, stronger collective feasibility among faculty) of smaller schools jointly influences dropout rates and achievement rates.

According to Toenjes (1989), looking strictly from the perspective of avoiding high dropout rates, it may be that smaller is better. Measured either as dropout rate or

graduation rate, the holding power of small schools is considerably greater than that of large schools. There are conditions that exist in small schools that would be hard to find in large ones. It is these conditions that enable students in small schools to complete their study and graduate. "The efficiency in the large high schools was due to size; in the smaller schools, it was due to a result of lower absenteeism and higher dropout rates" (Muir, 2001, p. 45).

### Summary of Chapter II

This chapter began with an introduction and an overview of culture in small schools. A literature review followed in the categories of: (1) school climate, (2) student-teacher relationships, academic success, teacher satisfaction, and student absenteeism and dropout rate. The chapter ended with a summary.

### CHAPTER III

## METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

This chapter presented the design, methodology, and procedures of the study. It explained the instrumentation, the subjects, and the procedure for data collection and analysis. The chapter closed with a summary.

#### Design

This study was designed to qualitatively assess (as referenced in chapter 1, p. 6-7) a culture within a small school environment, as perceived by school administrators and

teachers. In particular the study dealt with small high schools made up of no more than 500 students.

These small high schools were Diocesan Catholic High Schools. This researcher wanted to assess a culture within a small school environment. Therefore in keeping within a qualitative nature, a set of face-to-face interviews and phone interviews were administered to assess the various aspects of a culture within a small school environment. The purpose of the interviews was to assess, according to the interviewees' perceptions, the culture of a small school environment. The researcher, instead of adapting an existing survey or set of questions already in existence, composed the questions. Presently, there is not enough research-based material on small schools. All research has been conducted from the comparison of large schools to small schools. Therefore this researcher wrote these questions with the discovery approach in mind. This would allow the researcher to learn more from the perspective of the participants themselves. It would allow for a deeper, richer understanding of the culture within a small school environment.

The interview questions were entirely open-ended which lent to discussion by the participants. The questions were driven by this researcher's natural curiosity to discover more about the culture within small schools. The questions were taken directly from the literature findings of this researcher.

### Subjects

The subjects for this study were principals and teachers of two Diocesan Catholic High Schools in New Jersey and one in Rhode Island. Each high school is comprised of

grades 9-12. The total number of subjects in this study was 9. This number was kept small on purpose. Again, the qualitative nature of the study almost demanded that the number be small so as to guarantee rich, in-depth answers by the respondents. The researcher wanted to assess the subjects' own perceptions of a culture within a small school environment.

The subjects for this study included a group of 6 teachers, 2 from each of the three high schools. There were also a total of 3 principals, 1 representing each of the three high schools.

#### Instrumentation

The instruments employed in this study were face-to-face interviews and phone interviews. The questions created for both the face-to-face and phone interviews were identical and based on research and educational findings indicating that culture plays an important part in the environment of a small school. A small school provides an atmosphere that places value on each student involved in the school. According to Gottfredson (1985), students in smaller schools fight less, feel safer, come to school more frequently, and report being more attached to their school. "Students succeed in a climate of high standards yet are small enough so that teachers and students know each other well, that have authority and resources for teaching and learning, and that are accountable for results" (Clinchy, 1998, p. 204). The instrument was designed to assess culture, as well as other variables such as climate, student-teacher relationship, curriculum, and teacher satisfaction in a small school environment.

The subjects for the face-to-face interviews responded to questions as asked by the researcher. Each subject signed a consent form indicating that they would remain anonymous. The interview process would be completed at an agreed upon time between the subjects and the researcher as to not interfere with student instruction.

The subjects for the phone interviews responded to the same questions over the phone. Each subject signed a consent form indicating that they would remain anonymous. The interview process would be completed at an agreed upon time between the subjects and the researcher as to not interfere with student instruction.

In both the face-to-face interviews and phone interviews, a recording device was employed. Subjects were informed at the time consent was given.

The interview questions used during both the face-to-face and phone interviews are as follows. They were divided into five categories: (1) Climate in Small Schools, (2) Relationship of Student and Teacher in Small Schools, (3) Academic Success in Small Schools, (4) Teacher Performance in Small Schools, and (5) Student Absenteeism and Drop Out Rate in Small Schools. Validation of these questions taken directly from the literature research is included. It is presented in categories.

#### School climate (Category 1):

1. Hoy (1998): Open school climate is portrayed as an energetic, lively organization that is moving towards it's goals while simultaneously providing satisfaction for the groups' social needs.

2. Hoy & Sabo (1998): A healthy school is one where participants want to be rather than forced to be.
3. Gottfredson (1985): Students in smaller schools fight less, feel safer, come to school more frequently, and report being more attached to their school.
4. Raywid & Oshiyama (2000): It is not surprising that in students behave better in schools where they are known.
5. Macroff (1998): Students come to school lacking a Sense of Connectedness. They feel alienated, and so do not have a sense of belonging to their community, neighborhood, and school. There is no place to hide in a small school. Students will exhibit this sense of belonging in small schools.
6. Bank Street College of Education (2000): Parents, teachers and students are involved in understanding the problem. They get to anger sooner because they know about it sooner.

Relationship of student and teacher (Category 2):

1. Bank Street College of Education (2000): Teachers know students well.
2. Ancess & Wichterle (1998): Teachers know whether or not you got what you were supposed to get and then how to help you.
3. Bryk & Driscoll (1998): Individuals are involved with one another not merely because they are engaged on the same task, but because they are socially connected as well.



4. Aness (1998): In small schools kids are not just names in roll books. Their personalities, styles of learning, strengths and needs are known. "I like how I experience it; I feel at home."
5. Bank Street College of Education (2000): teachers have high expectations for the students which often leads to high expectations in the students themselves. In small schools close relationships exist and help raise expectations. The student senses just how much the teacher wants them to succeed. The student in turn does their best to meet these expectations.

Relationship of student and teacher (Category 3):

1. Bank Street College of Education (2000): Teachers know students well.
2. Aness & Wichterle (1998): Teachers know whether or not you got what you were supposed to get and then how to help you.
3. Bryk & Driscoll (1998): Individuals are involved with one another not merely because they are engaged on the same task, but because they are socially connected as well.
4. Aness (1998): In small schools kids are not just names in roll books. Their personalities, styles of learning, strengths and needs are known. "I like how I experience it; I feel at home."
5. Bank Street College of Education (2000): teachers have high expectations for the students which often leads to high expectations in the students themselves. In small schools close relationships exist and help raise

expectations. The student senses just how much the teacher wants them to succeed. The student in turn does their best to meet these expectations.

**Academic Success of students (Category 4):**

1. Cotton (1996a): A large body of research overwhelming confirms the superiority of small schools.
2. Bank Street College of Education (2000): Teachers can delve into teaching strategies like team teaching, integrated curriculums, multi-age grouping...all of which are shown to increase student achievement.
3. Sergiovanni (1996): Too often administration wind up functioning as engineers rather than leaders. In small schools the principal emerges as the instructional leader.
4. Raywid (1998): Principals state that they spend more time in classrooms more, helping teachers with instructional matters. They have time to make stronger connections with the community.
5. Larson (1991) & Oxley (1991): Two surveys and two case studies found a positive relationship between smaller school size and higher staff morale, higher levels of satisfaction & higher levels of teacher enjoyment.
6. Gottfredson (1985): A case study of 3 schools that increased and decreased in size during the year of the study found that staff morale tended to decline in schools that grew and increased in schools that became smaller.
7. Bank Street College of Education (2000): Teachers in small schools report that their staff development is sustained and focused. They were allowed to

pursue professional development both in and out of house. They were allowed to pursue their interests. It allows for growth & expertise.

8. Bank Street College of Education (2000): In small schools teachers can benefit from each other's ideas & support. They use each other as resources. They can sit and talk.
9. Bank Street College of Education (2000): In small schools teachers become the center of classroom practice.
10. Bank Street College of Education (2000): Teachers in small schools are open to new change and new ideas. They are treated as inventors, creators, thinkers and doers.

**Student absenteeism and dropout rate (Category 5):**

1. Bryk & Driscoll (1998): Research finds that student absenteeism is substantially lower in schools that are communally organized.
2. Bank Street College of Education (2000): Students attending small schools on average attend 4 or 5 more days of school per semester than the average high school.
3. Jordon & McPartland (2001): Students are likely to attend school regularly when they get along with school adults and when they feel personally expected to come to school every day and are missed when they do not come.
4. Cotton (1996a): Small schools provide the structure for a low student-teacher ratio and small size to promote student engagement.

5. Burkham & Lee (2001): Social interactions are an important part in academic outcomes.

### Procedures

The superintendents of the three school districts involved in the study granted permission for this research. Once permission was granted, the teachers of each school were picked at random to participate. Permission was then received by each of the six teachers participating.

The researcher met the two principals and four teachers involved in the face-to-face interview process at a mutually agreed upon date and time at the school where each was employed. The researcher interviewed one principal and two teachers over the phone at an agreed time and date.

### Summary of Chapter III

This chapter presented an introduction and a discussion of the Methodology and Analysis used for this study. It included the design of the study, the subjects, and the procedures for data collection. It closed with a summary of the chapter.

## Chapter IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of principals and teachers of the culture within a small school environment. The small school environments were small high schools comprised of no more than 500 students in both New Jersey and Rhode Island.

The purpose of this chapter was to present the research findings of this study. Nine subjects were interviewed altogether: six teachers and three principles. Four teachers and two principles were interviewed face-to-face. Two teachers and one principle were interviewed by telephone. The questions created for both the face-to-face

and phone interviews were identical and based on research and educational findings indicating that culture plays an important part in the environment of a small school.

This chapter consisted of an introduction, an organization of the analysis, including the interview questions and as analysis of the data that was comprised of an analysis of the overall responses. This chapter concluded with a summary of the chapter.

### Organization of the Analysis

The following interview questions served as the basis for this study:

1. How many incidents occur involving the use of drugs? Alcohol? Weapons? Physical Disturbances? Please explain. (Klonsky, 2000b).
2. Describe the atmosphere in the school? Is it one of feeling safe and secure? (Meier, 1998).
3. What type of co and extra curricular activities are students involved in? Is it a large percent of the student body? Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).
4. Is the administration readily available and supportive to the staff? Do they receive praise? Do they feel appreciated? Describe. Is the morale of the staff good? Describe some of the planned activities to help keep the morale high. (Gottfredson, 1985).
5. How can you tell that students and teachers/administrators are respectful to each other? (Cotton, 1996b).

6. Do students feel comfortable when speaking to teachers? Administration? Do they greet each other outside of class? Please explain. (Gottfredson, 1985; Clinchy, 1998).
7. Is the curriculum college preparatory minded? Does it stress higher order thinking skills? Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).
8. How far will teachers go to help students? Do they go the "extra mile?" (Gottfredson, 1985).
9. Who makes the follow-up calls to parents when students are absent? At what time of the day does this occur? (Bryk & Driscoll, 1998).
10. Are teachers involved in the decision-making process in areas such as curriculum, discipline, and the budget? (Bachus, 1992).
11. Are there ample opportunities for staff development, both in-house and out? What are some of them? (Fine & Somerville, 1998).
12. Are teachers, students, and administrators proud of their school? How is this demonstrated? (Hoy, 1998).

### Presentation of Overall Responses

The subjects interviewed for this study were six teachers and three principles. Two teachers and one principle were interviewed per school. The number of schools in the study was three. There were twelve questions asked of each subject. This section presented the responses from these questions.

*Question 1*

How many incidents occur involving the use of drugs? Alcohol? Weapons?

Physical Disturbances? Please explain. (Klonsky, 2000b).

*Respondent 1.*

Drugs? No. Definitely no not within the school uh...do I think kids in school do drugs? I'm sure they do over their weekends and stuff like that but no.

(Alcohol) I'm sure again they do it over the weekend.

(Weapons) That I have no idea about to tell you the truth. I haven't seen anything within the school. I never even heard any whispers about it personally so...

(Physical disturbances) Fights? Definitely um, yelling and disagreements about stuff you know. Stuff, that you know we'd probably consider silly at our age you know, but you know, big deals to them boyfriend, girlfriend conflicts who's dating who and you know. When you're in high school life uh, life changing things.

*Respondent 2.*

(Drugs) Um, I would say no. I think there's been...you know I've heard hints from the kids you know, ah, kind of a side comments but nothing that um, nothing that I could really pinpoint as ah, as real drug issues or drug problems.

(Alcohol) Alcohol again I mean you kind of hear from time...no specific incidents but you kind of overhear the kids as they talk about you know parties that go on, on the



weekends and things like that and this person was drunk or that person was drunk but ah, no specific ah, alcohol related problems in school.

(Weapons) No weapons.

(Physical Disturbances) Yea there've been you know, the occasional fistfight and the slapping fights and things like that and um, verbal um, confrontations. But ah, other than that ah, nothing, nothing I guess out of the ordinary in my, ah, my experiences so far.

*Respondent 3.*

Um...I would say the use of um, drugs, I would say alcohol would be the most frequent. Incidents in the school? I haven't, I haven't come in contact with any. Um, I maybe have assumed at times but, and I am young so I figure I have a pretty good assumption of whether or not someone's using but I may have suspected one or two of my kids had a problem and, and I addressed it with the guidance counselor with the drugs. Um, weapons I've had no incidents of. I think I saw a pocketknife once and I took it away but besides that I never feared for my safety or any of my students safety.

(Physical disturbances) Yea, we have a couple of scuffles in the hallway um, boys, sometimes girls but, nothing that you know, it warrants medical attention. I, I do not offer to break them up. Um, but no I mean, nothing.

*Respondent 4.*

Um, do you mean, like, um, how many of our kids experience in their everyday life or just in the building?

(In the building) It's, it's of drugs...um, none. Yeah, it's just not our climate. Ah, I would say there are kids in the last couple years that I've been in school maybe high, maybe. Not drunk, I haven't seen any alcohol. And weapons I haven't seen. Um, it doesn't mean that they're not experiencing some of these things obviously outside of the school context. In school? I could say um, you know, very, very, very little. Um, yeah, it's not just our climate.

(Physical disturbances) That is more of our climate. Um, you know, again I guess it's cultural. You know, part of um, one of the quick responses that some of these kids learn is um, to defend yourself. And it's passed from generation to generation. In my position I dialogue with a lot of kids um, a very typical lesson learned is if somebody hits you hit them back. So, um, um, so it's passed down, you know what I mean? Generationally, you know. Um, so um, physical fights? I would say we probably have um, one a month. You know what I mean? Eight in a year. Maybe ten at the very, very most. Um, and again they're not violent, very violent. They're more like grappling, pushing, um, you know again. A lot of the kids don't like to see it so much that it's broken up quickly. You know, one person might punch one other person and that's it, it's over, you know what I'm saying? So it's not like ah, it's not part of the norm. Um, but yeah, as far as like verbal arguing, you know, yelling matches, um, those could happen more typically um, once every three weeks. You know, um, whether that be between student to student or student and teacher or you know so.

*Respondent 5.*

Drugs? Um, there are none that I'm aware of.

Alcohol? Um, let's see. At the school? Again, none that I'm aware of. I mean, I'm sure kids use alcohol but at school none that I'm aware of.

Weapons? Again none that I'm aware of.

Physical Disturbances? Um, I don't think I've ever seen um, actually a fight. I mean, I've seen bumpings and things but uh, I don't think I've ever actually seen a fight.

It's actually a very um, pleasant climate.

*Respondent 6.*

I would say more than what we are aware of. Um, you know, I, I've been here a while, I probably and you know not being in administration I'm certainly not privy to all of the incidents um, but I mean, I've heard through other teachers, other students of I would say of at least a dozen. Um, but like I said those are just the ones that I've kind of heard through the grape vine. Uh you know being a classroom teacher I'm not, privy to, to all of the uh, information. But my sense and, and I get this sense from the kids it's that it's, it's you know it's, it's out there. It's happening. Um, and uh you know probably more so than the administration knows.

(Alcohol) I would say that would probably be the most prevalent and I certainly you know I teach mostly uh all sophomores and I have a freshman homeroom and not to say that those kids are not doing it either but certainly if you spend the day with the seniors um...I had a senior homeroom last year and you know on Monday morning I would hear

then chatting in homeroom about you know what party I went to, and who got drunk and, and this or that. Um, so I would say alcohol is very prevalent amongst the juniors and seniors. Um, drugs I would say probably you know a much smaller um group of students who are doing that.

(Weapons) I have never had that experience here of, of, ah, either hearing of anybody bringing a weapon. Um, so I, I pretty honestly can say that's not a problem here.

(Physical disturbances) Uh, very rare to be honest with you...very, very rare. Um, yeah you know nothing actually is really you know, you know a few little scuffles here or there. But you know ah, I, I subbed in public schools for a couple of years you know student teaching and then I subbed there for a couple of years and I, I tell you I saw more in I subbed a total of maybe 250 days. And I, I saw more, more in my 250 days than I did the years I've been here. A lot more.

#### *Respondent 7.*

(Drugs) We...when I first came, ah, my first two years we did and ah, we ah, we did rehab worked with a ah, number of those students and those students that were actually dealing drugs, there were a number of those ah, and we did ah, dismiss them from the school because they were actually taking money and ah, doing dealing. But we were very successful with six students who went through rehab and are now have been clean ever since.

(Alcohol) Alcohol is ah, really no problem here. However we are aware of the weekend parties and what goes on there and that's something that we really can't control. But I

will say ah, in school the students are, are very sober. I'm very, very fastidious about them having any beverages on their desk during homeroom or during class because I have learned from past experiences, not here, that necessarily the contents of what's listed on the outside of that bottle are not necessarily the contents inside. But ah, we've had no serious, nothing serious with the drinking or alcohol.

(Weapons) No incidents with weapons whatsoever. We're very, very lucky there. We've had ah, ah, kids make threats with, ah, towards each other ah, and even that has subsided. But there's been never a situation where I've physically had to remove ah, weapons from the students.

(Physical disturbances) I am really happy, and am probably going to regret saying this and I don't know if you should even put this part on the tape (laugh). We've had one fight this year and again no, no slur in gender here. We're having more problems with the girls with fighting than we are with the boys. We did have ah, in the past two years some fight but nothing excessive. There was never mass fights in the cafeteria or in the classroom. More like one against the other, involving two people.

#### *Respondent 8.*

Drugs, alcohol or weapons... actually we've had no incidents of ah, weapons, no incidents of alcohol in my three years here, uh, and no incidents of drugs that we've caught. Now I'm quite sure that there's been some activity, you know. I think anytime you have this amount of teenagers, but ah, nothing that we've caught. We do have a kid on home study right now who was arrested over the Christmas, over the winter break ah,

for possession of a controlled substance. So I know there's activity but it doesn't seem to make it in the building, at least in front of us.

(Physical disturbances) We have very few fights. I think we've had three this year. Uh, up until this year we used to throw them out...one punch and they were out. Um, but I thought that was kind of ah, harsh, ah, so we amended it. It's a ten-day suspension, anger management, out-of-school suspension, anger management, behavior uh contract, and with the understanding that if there's another fight, the student is withdrawn immediately. We have no in-house suspension.

*Respondent 9.*

(Drugs) Um, you mean in school, per say? (Yes) In the school... In my tenure we have had very, very few in school.

Alcohol, drugs, I'd say maybe 3 or 4 occasions.

(Weapons) No.

(Physical Disturbances) Rare.

*Question 2*

Describe the atmosphere in the school? Is it one of feeling safe and secure?

(Meier, 1998).

*Respondent 1.*

Yea I definitely think there's no uh no fear of anyone ever walking in with a gun to the school or something like that you know. That's never or a student coming in and physically threatening me or anything like that. That's not something I ever, ever really worry about or, or think about happening in the school.

*Respondent 2.*

I would, in terms of safety and security? Yes I think it is. I think it's, I think it's very ah, safe in terms of, in terms of the kids themselves I don't think there's any um, I don't think there's anything that I would call unsafe in dealing with the ah, dealing with the kids on a day to day basis. I never feel that the kids are going to come at you with weapons and they're gong to come in here and ah, and start trouble and start fights whether it's with each other or, or teachers. I think there is though, I mean, in the way back of my mind I mean, you know, you always have I guess that fear after Columbine that you know who knows, I mean, what could happen. Someone could just walk in and start shooting up the school or something like that but I don't think that something that I you know, worry about on a constant basis but I mean, you know, we have tried to put in, we're trying you know, do security measures. We have these badges you know, to try to indicate who's a stranger and who's not. We also...they just put in new ah, doors that lock from the inside. So certainly I mean, security has been an issue you know, in the minds of I think, the administration and the staff to an extent. But I would say with the

kids I don't feel there's any um...I don't go into school ever and think that you know, that I feel threatened or I think any of the kids feel threatened.

*Respondent 3.*

Oh absolutely. What's nice is that it's so small. Everyone knows every kid. So like when we have a school dance and a kid walks in I know if they're not from here. So I think that's what's nice about it...being small. That, I mean, the principal and the dean know everyone's name. Not only their name but, I mean, know, know their situation and their status here at school. So that's what makes me feel safe that there's, that there's a boy wandering around the building and if doesn't go here someone's going to catch him before he reaches my room. So, yea, I've always felt safe.

*Respondent 4.*

It's hard to tell in the sense that um, obviously each kid brings with them their own um, perception of what they see around them. Um, for me since I interact with all the kids they're all innocent to me. You know what I mean? Um, but I've worked with some of the kids who definitely is their perception is that um certain kids are less safe than others. Um, you know as adults, I, I think we have a better way to um, um, um, to filter some of the language that the kids are using and how tough they're trying to present themselves, you know. Some of the younger kids might hear some of the older kids saying, like I'm this tough, I'm that tough and that might be like, oh he really is. As, as an



adult I can say oh that's just a kid you know, fronting in front of other kids or you know, um, so I would say that you know, the vast majority of kids in this building feel very safe, um, there's been um, no sign that they don't. I mean there's not kids transferring because of it. There's not kids coming to see me because they're afraid of other kids um, you are going to attack them or and there's not tangible examples. They don't see kids getting jumped in the bathroom. They don't see kids you know, carrying weapons in school so you know; yeah the climate is very, very safe and secure.

*Respondent 5.*

Oh, I would say absolutely.

*Respondent 6.*

Definitely. Definitely.

*Respondent 7.*

I believe it is. Ah, I believe it's probably one of the main reason, if not the main reason unfortunately that ah, people are sending their children here, because of the ah, safety and security factor. And it, it bothers me but it's something that all administrators today have to address that education isn't the first reason why, it's becoming the second reason.

*Respondent 8.*

I would say kids here would say they feel very safe and secure. Um, if you just look at the stuff they leave around you know, they leave their purses and their school bags, and their knapsacks. It's all over the place. They throw their coats down. We generally don't have things disappear. Once in a while, but um, I don't think they're afraid of leaving stuff around. I think they're definitely not afraid of being beat up or harmed in any way. Um, about our biggest problem is we get the he said, she said stuff going on that goes on in every school. But I would say basically it's ah, pretty, pretty problem free in terms of physical violence. All the doors are locked. Ah, of course if they see somebody in the parking lot coming towards the door they open the door. That security is an issue that we really have to deal with a little bit better. But basically ah, when they come through the front door they have to buzzed in and there is an intercom so you can ask.

*Respondent 9.*

It is an extremely safe and secure environment. Uh, the kids feel very, very comfortable. Uh, parents are very pleased with the environment. Uh, it's a very warm, caring environment. And that's what... I mean, we have, have youngsters who come here who uh, who can't make it elsewhere and they feel very comfortable here.

*Question 3*

What type of co and extra curricular activities are students involved in? Is it a large percent of the student body? Can staff regularly be seen at these activities?

(Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

*Respondent 1.*

Involved? A lot of them are involved. Since we're a small school you know. A lot of them are involved in sports because it's not you know like not like you have to compete with a thousands other guys to get into uh to compete so if you want most of them, I know most of the guys, most of the girls in the school play sports. That's the big thing to get involved in. Plus we have like the campus ministry, and um we have the plays and you know since it's a small school if you want to participate there's really no excuse.

Is it a large percent of the student body? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

I think most of the kids who want to do and other kids just really don't you know. It's not cause they can't make anything it's cause they don't want to participate. I mean we have programs where there's really no competition you just you know you join up. And like the campus ministry comes to mind that's a good one you know, key club you know there's no competition that's there just to help other people.

Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Um, some to tell you the truth I don't go. I work at nights, and it's a small school, Catholic school, so I gotta you know, most of us I think, I wouldn't be out of line if I were to say that most of us probably have some other job or do something other...so I could not tell you personally. I work at night so me myself, I myself can't uh can't show up to too many outside sport events.

*Respondent 2.*

There's a variety of things I mean, certainly in sports um, you know, they're involved in but I don't think it's too ah, you know, in comparison to where I went to high school and where I taught before I don't think the sports are taking as seriously here as ah, in the ah, public school. And in probably in a lot of Catholic you know, high schools I mean, you know, I, I just don't think the sports program here is very, is very strong...with the exception of maybe basketball which is pretty good. Um, so, and I think actually for the ah, girls actually it's, it's kind of a ah, different thing you know, kind of moving towards you know, more and more girl athletics. Um, I think here though actually there is a real strong ah, extra curricular activity with the girl's with the cheerleading. Which yea, I was kind of, you know, kind of surprised that I think, you know, cause kind of the trend is to go more away from the cheerleading and more into the um, you know the sports, you know, sports activities. Um...but the cheerleading here is still a big thing with the girls and they're pretty talented with it. Um, but as far as the other extra curricular activities I mean, you, you have, have to a certain extent you have

here the ah, um extra curricular activities um, you know, specifically involving Catholic schools you know you have ah, you have you know, your certain um, ah, you know, what would the...well service activities that you have here that I don't, that I don't necessarily think that you, they're, they're, more specifically Catholic orientated obviously than you would have in the public school situation. But, ah, I would say overall, my overall impression is the extra curricula's here are not as serious, not taken as seriously at least as the extra curricular activities in um, in the schools I've been in in the past

Is it a large percent of the student body? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

I would think in one way or another there's a lot of kids involved in, in, in extra curricular activities. But again, it's just not, it's not to the, it's not the, ah, intensity level as maybe some other places. You know, it's not as ah, you know, it's just, it's not as pronounced I don't think in, in the overall high school experience.

Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Laugh...I don't know because I, I've never been to one. I've never been to one so that might be difficult for me to answer. So maybe that answers your question to any certain extent. But I mean, I've actually, I, I, I teach a few miles away from here ...excuse me, I, I, I, my home is a few miles away from here. So I think, I think I'm actually one of the people who has one of the furthest commutes. So that might be different if you know, if you're less than a few miles and I think ah, as one of the younger

people on the staff I think, I think, I'm of the, I don't think there's many younger people on the staff that are married and have children. So that, I guess that plays into a part of ah, of, of, how much you can give you know, to the after school stuff.

*Respondent 3.*

Oh, there's a, a fairly good amount of 'em. Um, we offer I'd say two or three sports a season. We are smaller so we don't have, always have a good JV and varsity level but basketball there's all three. Um, there's a, a fair amount of um, involvement in extra curricular activities but again it's sort of you know, what's popular at the time and what's not. I do student counsel and I've been disappointed so far but it's only because it's been a work in progress. I have like 6 solid kids which out of the whole school is actually pretty good. So, um, they are, I mean, they're here after school. I don't know if they do activities to fill, fill the time that they're here after school or just because, I mean, they stay after school I think maybe just because they prefer being here than being home. So they do activities to occupy that time. But they do enjoy them. They enjoy our retreats and the yearbook staff. I mean, I would hope that it would be more but as of now there seems to be you know, a fair amount.

Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Yea. I go to dance team. So we had um, the basketball games. Football? I did not make it too often. Um, probably because it's on Saturdays and I live far away. But

baseball is very exciting. So there is a far amount of faculty support for the teams and it's obvious when the kids, when we go...the kids like it. It's more the younger teachers but I feel it's like sort of our job. I mean, we, don't have kids, I have don't have kids to go home to. Why can't I stay for the baseball game?

*Respondent 4.*

Um, well it's been historically an athletic um, school. Again, obviously it started as an all boy' school um, you know typically an all boy's school is that there's a 30-40 year legacy of sports, sports, sports. You know, sports is a huge thing here and with a small school um, I'm going to guess that about 150-200 are participating in some type of sport. Um, so you know that's a huge percentage of the population can be part of sports. Um, as we are getting more um, more people in, more kids in, expanding everything um the things I also see them actively involved in um, are music, choir, um, there's a play that's put on every year, so the drama program um, forensics is definitely like, you know, one of the big things. So, we're starting to attack the arts more you know, and I guess the final thing is speaking of the arts, is the art program here. Um, kids hang out and do art um; they do it downstairs with the art teacher. They paint murals all over the building um, it's just for some reason, it's a huge component of these kids lives. They just love art. So, I would say sports? Definitely. You know, typical of high school. Um, but then the arts, um, you know whether it be like actual art um, music or theater of some sort um, um, forensics...

Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Well I'm a coach, so um, yeah, so I do, I do go and um, I do go see. (Are there other staff members there when you go?) Yeah. Absolutely. Um, again in a smaller school different people take on different roles uh, and those roles don't seem to change a lot you know. Um, so it's the same...yeah, I would definitely see faculty, other faculty and there will be the same faculty at most of the same events. Um, but yeah definitely.

*Respondent 5.*

A whole list huh? We have a very extensive athletic program, very I can't even name the number of teams that are uh...you know, there's fall sports and spring sports. There's girls, there's boys, there's varsity and JV. There's ninth grade there's junior high. We have things like the big sports, you know baseball and soccer too, um golf and tennis and sailing. It's extremely extensive list of sports and we had an assembly uh two weeks ago which was at the end of the day and most of the afternoon sports who had to leave for away games, they have to leave by 2:15 and so that's 15 minutes before dismissal. So we're at this assembly and it was 2:15 and I couldn't get over the number of students who got up to leave because they were on sports teams, you know they were leaving. I don't know the percentage. I know the athletic department probably knows the percentage of kids involved in sports but there's a ton of kids are involved in sports. Um we also have a very active uh, theater program and they put on two productions a year, one in the fall and one in the spring. And so that involves a lot of kids in terms of the acting, uh also the kids in band who play for the musical, as well as the kids who are in the technical



department both in terms of building the sets and running lights and microphones. So again that covers a whole like gamete of kids, a ton of kids. Um and then we also have, it's part of the curriculum... actually here we have a Christian service program which is part of the religion program. And so all of the kids in the school have to be involved, at least in the high school have to be involved in at least 40 hours of um, activities. And a lot of kids are involved in much more than that. So that, that's actually you know involving everybody in the school

Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Yes. Yes. I mean some people are into sports more than others and uh some people are into theater more than others. But I'd say generally there's ah, usually a really good turnout. The other day when I was leaving I saw again a lot of the uh teams practicing and a lot of the faculty also um are coaches. So that when you know when I was leaving I was like looking at all these guys who were out there coaching. So yea there's a lot of involvement in the staff.

*Respondent 6.*

Um there's certainly lots of sports. Definitely you know a lot of sports. And uh, there's a big, very big drama program here ah, that the kids are involved in. They put on a drama performance in the fall and a big musical in the spring which they're actually gearing up for this weekend. Um, so that's, that's a big ah activity here. You know we've

got, we've got a lot of other ah academic based activities, ah a model legislature, a mock trial, a model UN, a bat club.

(Is it a large percent?)

Um, would that include sports? (yes) Uh, yeah I would say if you were to add in the sports, the drama, the other academic ones, yeah I would say a very large percentage of the student body is, is involved in at least one if not several. You know, they, if anything some of the kids over extend themselves.

Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Um, yeah I would say so. Um, I myself usually don't go to the sports um, only because of the distance I live from the school. So it's kind of tough. Ah, but I know there are, there are some teachers who you know very, very faithfully attend a lot of the sporting events. Things like the drama event, um, I would say it's probably close to 80 percent, 90 percent attendance by the faculty.

#### *Respondent 7.*

We, for a small school we have an extensive program of ah, athletics for both boy's and girl's on all levels ah, varsity, junior varsity, freshman levels in all sports. Ah, we have ah, a number of, of extra curricular activities Literary Magazine, ah, school newspaper, Key Club, Essay Square Club, ah...what we do here is if a group of students are interested in forming an activity ah, all they have to do is get together, ah, find a

moderator who will chair it for them and we usually can go ahead with the activity.

Again as I said, for a small school we have a vast, vast program.

Is it a large percent of the student body? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

I would believe so. I would think that I would be safe in saying that maybe ah, at least 75% of our students are actively involved in something. We stress with the kids here that you can find your niche here. There's something here available for you but you have to go out there and find it, whether it be in athletics or extra curricular.

Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

In the beginning no and ah, it's interesting that you should ask that question because ah, with the play we just had four performances of it. It was the best turnout I've seen of faculty ah, attending at least ah, one of the performances of the play. So we're making inroads there. And again, and I say this ah, very guardedly, ah, the younger people, the younger staff members are more prone to go to the activities. The older, the veterans kind of have been doing this for a long time and, and I guess they're a little tired and ah, just don't have that energy and drive anymore. And that's not meant as a criticism.

*Respondent 8.*

Um, well, we, it's, this year we instituted an activity period during the day that happens every other week so kids who work or take care of little brothers or sisters they can be part of activities. Every kid must be in one activity. But we have a whole bunch of athletic...we have football, basketball, baseball, girl's softball, ah, track, ah, basketball, boy's and girl's. Ah, so, a large number of athletic activities. And then we have, I think we have, we probably have over 27 different clubs and different kinds of activities that kids can join.

Is it a large percent of the student body? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Ah, I, I don't know what the percentages are per say but yeah we have a lot of kids. I mean, I always say we have two dismissals here; we have the regular 2:30 dismissal and then we have the 5:30 dismissal and sometimes I'm not sure which is the larger dismissal. Um, but yeah I would say there's a good number of kids that are involved. Just softball for example, girl's softball, um, 46 kids went out for the team so we had to have a JV and a varsity. Ah, we really don't have a cut policy. Some coaches will cut but we don't have an official policy.

Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Um, you see kind of the same, old faces. You know ah, some are very faithful in everything and others don't do any other things for, for a variety of reasons. You know,

child care, ah, responsibilities and other jobs...those kinds of things. But actually I, I find for the most part the faculty is pretty supportive of student efforts in a lot of different areas. We have uh, really strong theater program. Uh, athletics. I'd say about more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of our kids are involved in athletic teams in one season or another. Um, we have um, have a model legislature, we have mock trial, we have ah, model UN ah, we have band, ah, chorus, show chorus. I mean basically we have a lot of activities for kids to be involved in. Unfortunately this is a problem for some and they need to travel by bus to get here and back. And some of them travel for 45 minutes to an hour. Ah, so not everyone can participate in those activities.

*Respondent 9.*

We have uh, really strong theater program. Uh, athletics. I'd say about more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  of our kids are involved in athletic teams in one season or another. Um, we have um, have a model legislature, we have mock trial, we have ah, model UN ah, we have band, ah, chorus, show chorus. I mean basically we have a lot of activities for kids to be involved in. Unfortunately this is a problem for some and they need to travel by bus to get here and back. And some of them travel for 45 minutes to an hour. Ah, so not everyone can participate in those activities.

Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).

Ah, um, ah not as many as I would like. Ah, but you know, part of the, part of the ah, what I experience here with athletic events, ah they usually get cornered by parents, and uh, they're there to see the event and they don't know how to get out of it graciously and you know, we could set up an appointment. Uh, I guess it's due to lack of experience so rather that get into that, they don't go. Uh, it's unfortunate but that does happen.

#### *Question 4*

Is the administration readily available and supportive to the staff? Do they receive praise? Do they feel appreciated? Describe. Is the morale of the staff good? Describe some of the planned activities to help keep the morale high. (Gottfredson, 1985).

#### *Respondent 1.*

That's a definite yes. I mean, you can always walk in you know and to say I need to talk to later on it's important and have an appointment. It's no problem between the two vice-principals and the principal uh, really no problem whatsoever if you really had to talk to someone right away.

Do they receive praise? Do they receive appreciated? (Gottfredson, 1985).

Yea, in fact I was just talking to the principal to the other day. You know, I had the flu he said you know just to let you know you know you're, you're very reliable and

you know we appreciate that cause he was just saying you know it was just out of the blue. I had to ask him something and he's just like you know, because there's never any problems within your classroom I sometimes don't just get to talk to you cause there's nothing to talk about, just to let you know you know you're doing a good job and, and you know we appreciate that So we're not talking to you cause you're not appreciated but because there's you're you know doing a good job.

Is the morale of the staff good? (Gottfredson, 1985).

Yea, I think so. I think so. I don't think it's a problem.

Describe some of the activities to help keep the morale high. (Gottfredson, 1985).

None that I know of.

*Respondent 2.*

I absolutely think so. I think that is on thing that I ah, what we were talking before about the public versus the Catholic school situation. I find that administrative staff here is, is tremendously supportive um, in of terms of discipline with the kids, in terms of what you're doing academically, in terms of your dealings with the parents. Um...I feel also they're understanding to your family situations here. If you have a certain emergency or there's certain ah, you know, if you, if you have to attend ah, certain family functions

and I've had experience in all these areas, you know, if my, my kid is sick, or if ah, you know, I had to go, you know, if I had to go to a family graduation like, like my, my brother graduated medical school last year. Ah, you know, they, they, gave me no problems with that kind of stuff um, you know, with family situations and in all my dealings in terms of with discipline ah, with the kids I've, I've found nothing but support here. And I can't say the same for the public school ah, situation.

Do they receive praise? Do they receive appreciated? (Gottfredson, 1985).

I think they absolutely make them feel, make me feel appreciated Um, I, I think, it's ah, the principal has a way of he, he will um, he'll just pull you aside sometimes and just tell you, you know, that he really likes what's going on. He ah, he had to cover my class once ah, this year earlier in the year and, and you know, the next day when I heard he was covering my class and, and then he mentioned I think boy what happened what in class? Is he angry that he had to cover my class? He's angry that I was absent. But he pulled me aside to say how impressed he was with the, the way the room was laid out, the way the kids were working you know, with what was on the bulletin board. I think those little things every day mean a lot. And I think how they also show their appreciation is um, you know, just like we're saying that you know, we have the day off on Wednesday when it was originally a half a day. And you know, I think those little things show appreciation. We had a Middle States evaluation this year and we, the week of Middle States we had the four days of Middle States evaluation and then on a Friday when Middle States left we had the Friday off. So I think in those little ways they, they really



show their appreciation for the teachers. And I think also ah, just the daily and weekly contact you know, which and I, you're made to feel like you matter. You're made to feel like you're important. And um, and I think it gives particularly younger teachers some confidence and you know, and I've, I've, I've mentioned that to the principal. I really have...I've mentioned to him that you know, he from, from if you come from the public school often times to what's here it is, ah, such a traumatic difference in I think how you are ah, treated and respected. Maybe that's just him as a person, maybe that's just a little bit more of what you get in a small Catholic school, I don't know. You know, cause I came from a larger, two larger public schools where I worked with over a 1,000, with you know, a 1,000 kids in both of them. Yea, so maybe some of it that you can come into more personal contact with your teachers as the principal than you would in a larger high school. But he goes out of his way I think, to have good words for his teachers...now at least with me. If you're doing a good job he'll tell you.

Is the morale of the staff good? (Gottfredson, 1985).

Do I think...that's a good question. I think if you, I think, if you are a, if you're a dedicated teacher the morale in this school, the morale in this school is good. So I would say, I, I would have to say the overall, now you're talking about morale with the teachers? I would, I think the overall morale with the teachers is pretty, is pretty 50-50. I really do.

*Respondent 3.*

Oh, by far more than the school I was at previously. It's, it's unbelievable how they'll drop anything to um, help me. They're so readily available. It's almost scary how readily available they are. I can walk right in. Like absolutely if, I have any problems. Like I had a bad day last week and it was dealt with and executed with so...oh, they're available, 24, 7. I would, if I had a problem and they were gone I mean, I would have no problem calling them at home. They're great. They're you know...they're such, such a presence. Like I always say that at my high school our principal was like a hologram, like they projected them down when you needed them but here they you know, interact. So...yea.

Do they receive praise? Do they receive appreciated? (Gottfredson, 1985).

Yea, I definitely feel appreciated, I mean definitely by the administration. Um, I say at times, I'd like to be more appreciated by the students but they're young. They'll come into it eventually.

Is the morale of the staff good? (Gottfredson, 1985).

Um...I think that there's, it's pretty good. I think that there's um, definitely a division between the older and the younger and the ones who have been here for a long time. Um, but mean I, I, I would scout maybe along the lines of slightly apathetic. But I mean, they are. I think my experience has been unique just because um, there's no one

really in my department. So it's really just been me. This is my first year teaching of course, so...

The communication between the faculty I think definitely needs to be improved upon.

*Respondent 4.*

Um, I, I would say that um, um, yeah, ok, I tell you what I think really happens. Um, I think what really happens is um; you're supported when things are going well and you could be potentially the scapegoat when things aren't going well. Um, which has been my experience in every high school I've worked at, actually um, in every system I've worked at, in educational system. Um, it just seems like um, everyone knows that you're doing a good job, and they appreciate you're good job, they're definitely not not telling you. They are saying good job or I'm glad you saw this person um, but when there is a problem um, a lot of the stuff that you thought you were doing well might be told that you're not doing so well anymore. Um, so um...

Is the morale of the staff good? (Gottfredson, 1985).

Um, I think that it, it, it fluctuates. I think that it is um; it's good in the sense that people are passionate um, about the kids. The kids are definitely what keeps people um motivated. Um, they're also very, very quick to be frustrated by the kids. So they're moral is um, is quickly like depleted because they get frustrated um, quickly. Um, their, their, perceptions how kids should behave or where the kids should potentially be at by

this age or also culturally I think um, effects um, effects how they perceive things should, should go you know, according to plan and when the plan is broken, again there's a thing I've seen in every school I've worked at, it um, education creates a culture of complaining and of whining and of bitching and of moaning and um so, but I think that, you know it's kinda like I'd say, with the kids you have to filter what you hear. You know what I mean? Like I don't really believe a lot of it. I don't think it represents how the teachers really feel. I guess in a sense it's more venting. Never venting with administrator. There's never venting to administrators. The administrators exist on their own and the faculty exists on their own, as far as like, the communication goes as far as that. When it's not about anything important everyone gets along. But there's no like, um in my perception, you know, I wouldn't do it ah, I think the reason I hear so much conversation in the cafeteria or in the faculty room or just around is because other people aren't doing it either. They're not sharing with the administration how they actually feel. Um, what would be the point is what people really think. It's not really um, going to change anything. It's not like um, you know, it's not gonna yeah, you don't want to offend anyone, is really what it comes down to. You don't feel like um, somebody will say well ok, I can see where you're coming from, that's an interesting point. They'll say, like that's not the way it is. You're wrong for thinking that way or doing it that way. It's kind of the perception of how people seemingly feel, you know. Um, so and again with a small school um, it's more like a family. The nuances are you know, certain people have different problems than other different people and it's just small you know, it's not like just one person had a problem with everyone. So um, we had, you know, I, I don't hear or see very many times where um, people are approaching administration to just converse

about um, how they're doing or what's kinda going on or like that. It's not usually like that.

*Respondent 5.*

Yes. Um, let me see. Well I mean I, I think I do get positive feedback. Um, that's one way. I think another way is um, that the administration has been really working on trying to increase salaries, that's another way. Another way is I think basically that any opportunity that we have for like professional development, stuff like that like there's no questions about that. Um, you know if there's, if there's a way in which they can you know help defray costs, that's one possibility. But another one is just like in terms of you need to take the day off for professional development and having coverage's and stuff like that. Um and then another way now that I think of it is certainly a little more subtle than that...is that if you're hired to do a job it's kind of expected that you know how to do the job. And you know you have to do the job and so it's not a lot of looking over your shoulder stuff. So I'd say like all of those.

Is the morale of the staff good? (Gottfredson, 1985).

Yes. We have a nice mix. We have some people who are younger teachers and then we have um, a bunch of people um who ah, retired from the public school system who are here and I think that's encouraging both in terms of experience for the other

teachers and also it says to the kids that many of the people were retired but they want to be here.

*Respondent 6.*

Overall. Overall, I would say yes.

Um, I, I mean I would honestly have to say we do but not probably as much as, as really we should. Uh, we do have um, you know appreciation lunches ah, from time to time whether it's parent counsel you will do an appreciation breakfast or lunch for the faculty. Um, usually at the beginning and end of the year when we have our, our in-service ah you know the principle uh usually puts together a, a real, real nice catered lunch uh for us and you know I know he does that because um, he wanting, wanting to show his ah, you know gratitude for all that we do. Um, so there are occasions like that but I guess you know sometimes periods will go by where you know you wonder if you are appreciated. To be honest with you.

Is the morale of the staff good? (Gottfredson, 1985).

Um, I would term it good at this point. Yeah, yeah, I've certainly seen it lower. I've seen it higher as well. But overall I would say good at this point.

*Respondent 7.*

Very much so. Very much so. And ah, my, my position is that ah, the teacher is always right even though that teacher may be wrong. But out there the teacher is right. Ah, continually ah, praise ah, I affirm, I encourage, I ah, do everything that I can to ah, to compliment the teachers. I do this through ah, a weekly news bulletin ah, like for example today's bulletin. I congratulated the director and the set designer and the members of the cast, ah, costume people. Always do that if a teacher does something special. Always mention that in, in a bulletin. I'll even go over on the PA and not only for teachers but for students also and highlight anything that a student or a teacher may have done that is doing with the students.

Is the morale of the staff good? (Gottfredson, 1985).

Yeah I, I would say ah, yes the morale is good. The part where the morale is, is lacking of course is, is the perennial problem of Catholic schools and that's in the area of salaries.

*Respondent 8.*

I think so; I would like to say yes. Ah, it'd be interested in what they have to say. But what I do kind of laugh at is that they use this office, they go in one door and out the other and they frequently will come in and talk. Um I haven't had ah, I haven't had any incidents where you know, it got to me through the back door that somebody's upset

about something although certainly that could happen. And I, you know, I think I communicate with some more than others, ah, only because it's more their personality. But, people, people generally feel free to come in. I, I do leave the door, when the door is closed they know there's trouble, usually. Uh, you know, ah, but for the most part I think they would, I think they would say yes. I'd be, I'd be interested in knowing.

(Praise) Yea, I am, well in our faculty bulletin every week, the first item is always thank you to and whoever did what even if it's just show up at an activity. Um, last week we had ah, um, a memorial to the world trade center people. So I thanked the person that ran it and as well to the following people who showed their support by attending. You know, those kinds of things. So I think I do that. I think I, I do it informally. I walk around a lot, talk to people. Um, you know, certainly in their observations I, I try and...the accommodations far out weigh the recommendations even when I have to work at it. Um, but I think they can hear two or three areas that they need to improve on. We call them suggestions for growth. Sometimes they don't always take them but um, you know, I, I try and be; I think I try and be very positive with people. And, and I see that has a ripple effect. They're positive with kids. Kids are positive with each other you, know those kinds of things. So, I believe that's important.

Is the morale of the staff good? (Gottfredson, 1985).

We not, we haven't done any activities to boost morale here. Ah, and it's been, we are a work in progress, as you know and ah, we've had a lot of things we've tried to address. I mean, a lot of things. So ah, the in-service that we do...we meet once a week,



once a month, ah, we have a faculty meeting once a month faithfully. And um, there's usually a theme that runs through all of them in terms of in-service. This year we're working on a whole curriculum revision. We're using a particular model. They hate it because it's tedious, and you know, they work. However, I think the final product is really going to improve the quality of teaching and learning ah, ah, here, and assessing. So, um, specific, I think what's helped moral here is the school has, has done a 360, you know. So people, I mean even teacher attendance is better, you know. So people I think feel good about what we're doing here and the kind of stuff that we're trying to do and raising the academic bar and challenging kids academically and, and insisting on good behavior. So I, I think that kind of morale is a morale booster. Um, we haven't done you know, I mean I do, we have PTA, we have dinner together, we have you know, end of the year party, we have Christmas party, those kinds of things. But I'm not big on you know, little things in the mailboxes for St. Patrick's Day. I should be but I'm not. So... I wasn't when I was an elementary school principal you know, so a you know a flower on Valentines Day...their husbands can give them that.

*Respondent 9.*

As an administrator? As an administrator, I have to, I have to say yes. I think we're very supportive. I think we're very ah, supportive in every way possible. Ah, in terms of discipline, in terms of availability and support of teacher positions. Ah, but I have to say that I am very frank and very direct to a teacher. I will say to a teacher, I

don't approve of this; I will support you this time but the next time you're out on your own.

Ah, yes they receive praise. They receive ah, perks. Ah, I have ah, occasional lunches for them, dinners, appreciation party that they get invited to at the end of the year, uh, where I also invite board members, and people who supported the school over the year.

Is the morale of the staff good? (Gottfredson, 1985).

Yes.

#### *Question 5*

How can you tell that students and teachers/administrators are respectful to each other? (Cotton, 1996b).

#### *Respondent 1.*

How can you tell? Um I think uh just from the uh they way they talk to each other you know there's a good nature to it, joking around at the same time there's you know, work gets done and you know...I think you can tell in-between the periods. If I had to say there's a time you wanted to see it would be in-between the periods or... or as the kids are walking by and they say hello to the teachers. You know they don't have to say hello to you. I mean you know it's nice that they say hello to you but I think that's kind of you

know, they could just walk on by you know they're not in your class any more. They're not obligated to say hello to you or, or to stop and talk to you when, when, when they could be talking to their uh, to, to their classmates or to their friends. So when they stop, so, so when you see them talking to teachers in the hallway in-between classes or you know on their way when the bells going off, I think that's a good way. Or in homeroom when they're, they're actually taking time to talk to you about things, you know. Or after school when they're, when they're talking to you before they get to the bus. That's a good way to see. You know it's just more than you gotta be here for 43 minutes.

*Respondent 2.*

Respectful? I think that their ah, body language, I think it's the way they ah, look in your eyes when ah, you know your talking to them. I think it's the, ah, I think it's the way that they, I think it's the way they ah, you know they, they carry themselves um, um, throughout the day. You know if you confront them and they're you know, annoyed they, you know, I think you can tell even in the days following if you know, if it's, if they're respectful of you they understand that you know, you, you have to act a particular way, you have to take a certain action and then it's over. And then you move on with life. I think if there was a lack of respect I think you know, they kind of hold a, they kind of hold a grudge on the situation.

*Respondent 3.*

(Teachers) Um...I'd say at times I can certainly tell, um...what students respect what teachers and at times. Um, just by their behavior in general, their, their attitude in classroom, their attitude with your work, whether or not they think it's important enough for them to do. Um, but I also have a hard time judging their respect on just those things. Because it's like, it's new to them...like the way I run my classroom compared to the way some of the other teachers. In think we expect a little bit more than they've, that they've you know, witnessed in the past. So it's not that they don't respect us. It's just a foreign concept to them. I see the kids I don't have in class respect me more than the ones that do have me in class. Absolutely. Just because um, they don't, they don't do my work. And um...it's funny like when we have freshman for the day, um, the other students will, will say she's really fun outside the classroom. They tend to enjoy me more...like I have more kids hanging out in my classroom after school...then, just because they, they, in the classroom they say I'm pretty strict. But their level of respect has improved. That's what I would you know, like to say.

(Administration) I'd say, they I think they have more respect for the administrators than they have for myself. I mean being a principal I just think there's automatically some, some respect they get but also the consequences are more severe with them than they are with me. So...

*Respondent 4.*

Um, well you can tell that the students are respectful to the teachers because um, it's, it's just not acceptable for them not to. And unless, like we had you know a lot of kids getting kicked out or a lot of kids getting thrown into detention all the time. Those are kind of like the upfront you know, examples of how...you don't have 70 kids in detention every day. So obviously the kids aren't so offensive, you know. Um, I can personally that their respectful because I interact with them on a personal level um, and um, and can, can figure out therefore like where their morals are at, how they were raised a little bit you know, kind of how they perceive the world. And um, these are not um, tough kids. You know, they're just not. They come from tougher areas but um they're not mean, they're not offensive, they're not, there's no need for them not to be in a mainstreamed school, you know what I mean. They are able to function. Ah, you can tell that the teachers are respectful of the kids because they are willing to work here at, for the salary that the work at. Um, and um, again for the most part enjoy it. Um, and they're giving of themselves. You know again um, if you can think about of all the stuff that I was listing as far as sports, and the music and art and the theater, and um, forensics, and there's not one person who does those things, you know. So everyone's giving of themselves in addition to their actual academic day...on top of that in some capacity um, running an event here, going to this event, seeing the kids involved in that. So they respect um, they respect the kids on that level.

*Respondent 5.*

Um, how can you tell that they are? I don't sense like a lot of um, hostility. I don't sense ah, put-downs. Uh, I think it goes back to that question you asked about safety, you know friendly, it's a very ah friendly like friendly climate...um. Like one of the things that I see which is really nice to see is a mix of kids and I think partly it's the uh, extracurricular activities that kind of lead into this. But there's a lot of you know commadory between classes when freshman, sophomore, senior, junior, ...when they really mix readily and are friendly to each other and there's just not a lot of you know, I mean there's certainly isn't any physical difficulty but there's not even a lot of verbal you know put-downs and stuff like that. I mean yeah there are you know, I mean you have but that's not a, that's not part of the climate.

*Respondent 6.*

Um, they you know, they, they, I, I would never say that they, that they are not because when you walk into this building you definitely see that. How do I see that? Um, I think you know my students in general, I mean, I, I think the, we have, we in the building treat the students with respect. And I think in turn we then get that respect back. You know what I'm saying, um, you know I think if, if you set up an environment where you know the adults are not respecting the kids you're just going to get that right back in return. And they're not going to respect you. But, but in general we, you know we have an environment here where we respect the kids. And in turn we see that back. Um, you know kids are obviously you get every once in a while a student who's disrespectful to a

teacher or an administrator but um, for the most part the kids know what is expected of them and, and they are for the most part respectful.

*Respondent 7.*

Ah, first of all ah, relative to the ethnicity we're colorblind. I truly believe that. And um, you see that in the interactions among the students and among the students and, and the teachers. I've a committee going right now and they're reviewing the student government and we've been thinking of putting in a different model. I'm taking a back seat to this and the other day I attended a meeting of this committee. You should've seen something beautiful happening. The teachers and the students were talking to each other. There was no fear of intimidation or retaliation. They were truthfully expressing themselves in a very, very ah, constructive, critical manner. Ah, and you could see the respect that, that was persuasive in that, that situation. Is that true of every single student in the school? No, of course not. Overall, yes.

*Respondent 8.*

I think so. I think if you walked around you would see. Um, I'm trying to think if there's even one person that yells. I don't think we have a yeller in the building. Um, which I'm happy about. Ah, last year we had one; it was ah, end of September replacement. She was a retired public school teacher. And I thought I had hit the jackpot and she just screamed and screamed and screamed at them and created such a contentious

environment. And she departed the premises in March. I helped her understand that this wasn't the right fit. But, I think you would see, I mean it's something that we constantly work at cause our kids don't actually come being respectful. So we have to constantly work at it and ah, I think the parents are supportive but it takes work. And ah, you know, when they get the attitude or when they get their back up or you know the battles, so it takes work. But I think if you walked around you would see a very calm atmosphere ah, where you know, there's teaching and learning going on. There's a variety of styles. There's a variety of kinds of interactions going. Some classrooms are very tight; some classrooms are loose. I think the kids know where the perimeters are. I think our Dean of Discipline does a very good job. He's very consistent, very fair. Ah, I'm always amazed when they show up for detention. They know exactly what to do and they do it even if he's not in the room. So, you know, it's those kinds of things that kinda tell me. The kids will, the kids will say, yeah I know I did this. I guess I get a detention. Or I get a detention and a phone call. You know they know. I think the discipline code is clear. And I think that helps.

*Respondent 9.*

How can I tell that? Well, I observe it. Uh, I see interactions between student and teachers, teachers and students. Uh, but we're not a perfect environment and when I see something that is inappropriate or not according to the standards that I feel we should be measuring up to, I address it.



*Question 6*

Do students feel comfortable when speaking to teachers? Administration? Do they greet each other outside of class? Please explain. (Gottfredson, 1985; Clinchy, 1998).

*Respondent 1.*

See reply to question 5.

*Respondent 2.*

I, I think for the most part. Cause I think I'm, I'm pretty approachable with them. I bust their chops at times but, ah, you know, I think, I think they're comfortable. I you know just had last week in the cafeteria two girls spoke to me about something that was going on in the cafeteria with ah, a group of guys at their table. They were comfortable enough to speak with me and say to me hey, you know, can you do something about this. Can you help us out? And then afterwards you know, a few periods latter towards the end of the day they thanked me for helping them out with that situation. So I mean, I guess, you know, that's, I guess they feel comfortable enough to do that. I've had, I had one kid this year comfortable enough to ah, to you know, talk with, talk with me about something with you know, how his father acts during the day you know, how his father acts with him at home...not, doesn't show him you know, kind of the emotion he wants to be shown. He was able to talk with me about that. Which was kind of nice. But ah, you know, there also has to be I think that, I think there has to be a certain amount of

separation you know, between the teacher and the student. But at the same time though if they're comfortable enough you know, if they're comfortable enough to talk with me I would be happy to talk with them.

(Administration) I don't know. I don't think so. I think that's just kind of the nature though of administration, that of a principal. You're at, you know, you are at a higher level um, I think, and I think particularly ah, particularly...I think in a way, in particular in a Catholic school you know, there's a little bit more of a sternness and um, there's a little bit less, at least here of you know, there's not quite as much, of that ah, touchy, feely type of attitude. So I think that they aren't as, they don't feel the administration as approachable about certain things. They wouldn't be as comfortable but I think you know, I think that's a lot the nature of the business.

### *Respondent 3.*

At times maybe a little bit too comfortable. They do. I mean they don't have a problem approaching us or I think you know, we're all pretty readily available for a while to them. That's why when a kid comes and tells me that they weren't, they, they couldn't find me. I say that's, that's hard for me to believe because I'm here pretty often.

(Administration) Yea, I mean you can't say...like, the, what's nice is that they also all teach classes. All the administration teach classes. So they have them in their classrooms. So, I mean if I were in a parent/teacher conference and the kids saying, well I went to see her but she wasn't there the principal would immediately say she's there all the time.

Oh yes, in the hallway. I have some that would, would rather look straight ahead and, and not. But, um, the greetings vary from good morning to uh, you now, depending on their mood, or what time of the day, or what time of the season. The same with me though. So...

*Respondent 4.*

Yeah, yeah um, yes. I would say that as far as our staff goes, kids feel comfortable dialoging and interacting and approaching our staff. Out of class too. Because again, so much of the high school experience isn't just in the class you know, it's just living life together. Um, the only amendment I would guess I would put on it is kids don't feel in general able to talk to adults only because you never ever, really see adults say like wow, you're right, I'm wrong. You know, like that is totally true I'm not only apologizing to you I'll apologize to the class in which I embarrassed you in front of. You just never, ever see that. So, um teachers have an easier way of being respectful to the kid because they know there's a power position that they hold, um. I guess I'd be interested in seeing how much respect happens outside of that. When they're vulnerable. Are they still respectful if they're vulnerable, you know?

(Administration) No. (Not even in or out of...?) Some of them feel comfortable talking to different ones. Different kids have different relationships at different times. But I would say um, I would say that most of the kids aren't going to go to the administration um, with their real problems. More of the kids you'll find who will talk to the administration are the ones who are in trouble. So, with the kids who have been in trouble a lot have

developed a relationship with a certain administrator and have gone through the process so many times of having to talk and being challenged to say what's going on and what happened and stuff like that? They'll talk. But it's much more rare that you'll see a kid um, um, except some of the kids talk to the principal and some of the kids I would say talk to um, the coach. Um, but, most of them talk to me um, or the guidance counselor who is here or um, again if they have a specific relationship with a teacher.

*Respondent 5.*

That's my experience.

*Respondent 6.*

Um, yeah I can really only speak for myself on that and um, I feel that they are. I certainly have ah, you know a number of students who will, you know will hang out at the end of the day for 10, 15, 20 minutes and will you know just chat about whatever. Kids that I've had in the past will, uh, you know I don't have them anymore this year but they'll come back and, and you know we'll chat for a bit or you know I'll talk to them about what are you doing for college and, and stuff like that. So, ah...

*Respondent 7.*

(Teachers) I believe that to be true.

(Administration) Oh yeah. I ah, I'm a little bit more formal with them, ah. My, ah predecessor used to let them walk in whenever they wanted to. I'm available to my students but they have to go through the process; make an appointment with my secretary and I'll sit down and talk and listen to any student. And even if I get involved in the discipline and sometimes I do, I'll never say ah, what did you do. I want to hear your side of it and I want to hear your side of it. And as long as you can speak respectfully ah, you can say whatever you want to say. And then what I find is that ah, kids wind up agreeing with you and they'll say ok ah, yeah, we can see where you're coming from. And I'll say to them ok, you were good at A and you were good at B, you were good at C but D is where we have a little bit of a problem. Let's work on that.

*Respondent 8.*

I think so. One of the things that 'm really happy about is this year more than ever ah, at least than my other two years, is we have a bunch of young enthusiastic teachers this year and they're here until 5:00. So the kids are...there's a lot of going to teachers and asking for help, which we didn't see that much of before. Um, but what that does is after they do their work they talk to their boyfriends, their girlfriends, you know, so it's, so it's I think it's a very positive atmosphere here. We have a thing that if you fail two subjects or more

You're in study hall. We call it the eighth period of the day. And what we're finding now is the kids are, teachers will come down and work with kids, or kids will say can I go see so and so, so there's a lot of back and forth that way. And I think its contributed...two

things have happened, I think the academic bar is raised so they have to work harder. I also think that whole issue of relationships which I think is critical for adolescents, um, I think the quality of relationships has improved greatly as a result and so, it's more, it's a nice ebb and flow in terms of how people relate here. Uh, so I mean, again it's the whole relationship thing is something that we've worked at here. Of course my first year I would honestly say it was angry, it was an angry place. And uh, I think teachers had a right to be angry and kids had a right to be angry. There was a reason for it. It was not unjustified. But it wasn't...now I feel like we're all on the same side. You know? We're at least we're all swimming in the same direction whereas before it was maybe we weren't always going in the same direction.

*Respondent 9.*

Uh, I would say definitely.

(Administration?) My door is always open and kids come in regularly.

*Question 7*

Is the curriculum college preparatory minded? Does it stress higher order thinking skills? Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

*Respondent 1.*

Uh yea, I mean, it's three, I mean we have I think three basic levels. You have the honors and then you got the college prep and then we got the uh I guess the, the basic, the IEP kids. But most it's geared to getting these kids prepared for, for college.

Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

Um...I, I won't speak for everyone on that one. Uh... I know I do, sometimes almost too high. Sometimes I almost forget you know, that they're just ...well you know sometimes you pose some questions and, and you realize you know, they haven't you know, you're talking about the Cold War now you know, and to me like even at my age you know I'm young but I know I lived through part of the Cold War. But they didn't live through the Cold War you know...they were, they were two so you talk about; you know US and Russia the fact that for 50 years whatever, we were going at it. To them that's history, that's not even something that happened in their lifetime, you know. Whereas my teacher could talk to me about to me and it could be something still, still be going on. So sometimes you know high expectations yea, but still you got to realize that you know, there is, they only know so much.

*Respondent 2.*

Well that's what they say that it's geared, geared towards college. Um, I think maybe it's geared towards community college, to be honest with you. I, I, I, think the kids here, I, I think it's a working class area um, it's an area where I don't really, you know, particularly from the town where I grew up in. Which is you know, an upper middle class town. I taught in suburban school districts. Um...I don't think the education is as stressed at home here in, in, with the kids and the parents as the towns I taught in the past and grew up in the past. Um...so I, I don't particularly think that a lot of what they're getting in the curriculum um, is necessarily going to ah, help them get, get into a four year college situation.

Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

I don't think most of them do. I don't think, I don't really think most of them do. I really don't think so. I, and I think that maybe, maybe that's some of it. Um, and, I think though that, I think though the kids don't have, quite to be honest, a high expectation of themselves. You know, and maybe, I may be wrong I don't think the families necessarily have a real high expectation. I think junior college here is really good. And, I mean, I, you know, anything above that, you know...Rutgers is a fine school. But that's a big deal here. And, you know, where I grew up and where I used to teach um, you know, Rutgers is a good school but you know, you got kids seeking Ivy League. You know, and I don't think, I don't think that's really even a thought. So, but I, I think that the thing that the



school provides, it provides the kids with a chance that wouldn't normally get the chance. I think it literally saves the lives of some of the kids particularly from you know, harder edge towns. You're really saving the lives of some of these kids. You're giving them a chance and you're giving them a place where you know, they're safe and they're secure every day so they can get that chance. Now what they do with that chance is a different, is a different story. But I think it provides, it provides a better opportunity from what they get around here. You know I was reading in the paper the other day the parents around here spend the lowest per pupil in the state. They spend the lowest per pupil in the state. And, you know, at least they can come here and I think they have, you know, a little more chance to succeed. I think there is a culture around them whether it's at home or in their communities where you know, going to college is not it's, it's not a big emphasis. And I think that it kind of shows it's way through what happens here at times.

*Respondent 3.*

College Preparatory.

Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

In some classes yes, in some classes no. I think it varies. I teach freshman and um, I teach a sophomore class and my sophomore think that some of the work I expect them to do is, is like sometimes they'll hand me a pieces of paper and I can't believe they

would hand that in with their name on it. Um, I think part; part of it is, um, part of it isn't. I don't think it's consistent, no. Because, I mean, I cover a senior class often and I can't believe what they're handing me sometimes. In six months, the teacher's just not going to get it. Um, so I think it would be helpful...and even in my freshman classes I think they, that I think I tend to be a little higher. Maybe it's because I just graduated from college and in my mind I know what they're looking for and I expect the same. No I don't lower them. In the long run, I mean, it takes awhile and, and it's March now and, and I'm still getting you now, crumpled up pieces of paper with one paragraph that's 15,15 sentences long, but... I may have more of a problem because their argument is always that this isn't an English class. It doesn't matter if it's an English class or not. You can't write one sentence that takes up the page. But, I mean, that's, the college preparatory I would, at times is absolutely in there. The reading seems to be up but I would say more the presentation of their work is lacking but I mean, I've also made the argument and the teacher will say where they go to school that might be fine. And I say I'd rather expect that they'll go to Harvard and that would be fine.

*Respondent 4.*

Yeah, yeah, I don't know what that means, but yes. (When they leave here their goal is to go to college) Meaning that we teach, we offer all the classes that you have to get in order to be...get accepted into college. Than yes, that is, than we are college prep. (Is this the perception of the kids...that they are going to college?) Ah, the perception of you know, some of our kids, you know again if there's between 60-100 kids per class, I

would say um, 75 of them are going to college no doubt about it. You know it's just like what they're gonna to do. Um, 5-10 of them are not going to college, that's just what they are going to do. Another like, 10 you know, 15 of them are um, it's an actual decision. You know, it's a tangible like I hope I can, if I can afford it, hope it works out for me, you now those kinds of things. It's not just because they want to that their parents are going to step up and pay. No. Um, and again, we are also um, culturally and generationally, um, you know, um, a few steps behind um, where you know, middle class, white America is at. I mean a lot of our kids are going to be the first obviously to go to college and many to first to graduate high school. You know um, which is a vastly different experience than again someone like me, who is the age I am and had you now, my father and family of ten in the 60's and 70's and every one of them went to college. You know what I mean, and they were all paid for by their family. You know that's ten kids in the 60's and 70's all definitely going to college. That's generationally have accomplished the goal of whatever we are supposed to be creating in this country quicker. So, you know, we do do college prep, the kids do understand that they're supposed to be going to college um, but there's so many cultural and other you know, actual environmental factors that go into it that it is a bigger decision than just I'm going to 13<sup>th</sup> grade cause I just finished 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

It's getting higher yeah. Depends, depends on how you look at it I guess. Um, depends on how it's applied. We have a lot of kids failing classes, a lot. Yeah I would say

half the kids in the building failed science. So, you know, it depends on how you look at it, I mean if saying that we're going to raise the standards high enough so that you have to accomplish this before you can get to college...than that on the surface sounds good. But when it's applied to a kid who's coming from public school and you know, just hasn't had that training up to this point, it's almost like almost what are we proving? Like um, you know like for kids who can't really read it's definitely not right. Um, to start saying we're going to teach you the same curriculum that the suburbs teach is um, out of place. So out of 100 kids here, about 80 kids would be in the basic level of another suburban high school, maybe 10 of them would be in the regular level classes, or 15, maybe 3-5 of them would be in, would actually make the honors curriculum at a suburban high school.

*Respondent 5.*

Yes it is.

Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

Um, I think so. I think so. I mean, occasionally we have some students who struggle and we have some students who we have to you know reassess with their parents you know after a while. But um, no but I think that they, you know most of them go onto college and do quite successfully.

*Respondent 6.*

Yes.

Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

They are high I think as, as a school community I think we need to raise it a bit. Um...so yeah that would be my answer to that question.

*Respondent 7.*

Ah, it is primarily a college prep curriculum. But we do have um, a track for our students who um, need remediation. And we do um, have some classified students ah, special ed. But ah, not to the degree where they're so severely impaired that we can't provide the resources to uh, to uh, really effectively deal with them. We have some EI's and NI's and we can work effectively with them. And we have Comp. Ed. teachers who come in and work with our students and do supplemental with them. I want to get away from that um, elitist tradition in, in Catholic education. Everyone, every child is entitled to a Catholic education if they want it. And we have to provide the means for them to have it.

Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

Yes, ah as a matter of fact our teachers have to ah, we require our teachers to give out a list of expectations at the beginning of the year for each one of their classes. And they delineate what they expect each ah, of the students to do. And, and it's all inherent in, in um, to um, the objectives what they want the students to accomplish in their classes.

*Respondent 8.*

We are 100% college prep, yes.

Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

Um, yes and no. Um, I think there was, I think there was a real ah, at one point I think there was some dummied down that went on here. You know? Ah, the whole...you should keep them in their seats. Keep them quiet. Avoid problems. Ah, you know, ditto them to death and you know, let's hope we can through another day. I think there was some of that. Um, the school changed ethnically in 5 years. It went from Irish and Polish to heavily minority. Um, we're very multicultural here but 51% African-American, 20% Latino. We have an Asian population. We have a white population. So I think what happened was there was this subconscious thing that they, "they" can't learn as well as...so let's just get through. And um, I think in the last three years what we have

attempted to do is say "they" can learn just as well as everybody else but maybe you have to change some strategies. And maybe you have to expect more. And maybe you have to be more determined to get more. And so that's the struggle we're in now I think ah, we, we really need, we have and we to continue to raise the academic bar but I'm always afraid is it going to be enough you know, for every kid in this building to really do what we want them to do? But the newer teachers ah, I think, have, they don't know anything else. The veterans though are starting to say, wait a minute I can raise this and I can demand and you know. So this whole curriculum revision is all about making sure that we have a coherent curriculum, that we've articulated vertically as well as horizontally, that you know, a senior teacher is giving a two page paper and a freshman teacher is giving a ten page paper; there's something wrong with that. Um, it's all about how we assess kids and what kind of skills we expect them to have when they graduate. And not just paper and pencil type skills...so it's been a great, ah a great ah, needs of communication, I think, a way of talking.

*Respondent 9.*

Yes it is. (Higher order thinking skills?) Yes it does.

Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

Um, well, let's see. I, I would say for the most part yes. Um, we do have some that I would say are not demanding enough.

*Question 8*

How far will teachers go to help students? Do they go the "extra mile?" (Gottfredson, 1985).

*Respondent 1.*

Yea I think any teacher will stay after. Uh I mean personally, I usually show up at 7:30 and I say you know, come and see me if you have any problems. Unfortunately you could stay, you know but you, you can't hold a gun to their head and make them come. Uh I, I think, I think just about any teacher here would say if you had a problem, you want to stay after or if you want to see me during their lunch or, or whenever, they'd be here for the kids. The problem is getting the kids to take advantage of that.

*Respondent 2.*

Again, I, I think, I, I think, there is a mix here. And I think it's kind of indicated in my answers. There's a split here. New guard, old guard...it's not even about age. I think though that there is a willingness to help. I mean, I've seen teachers ah, in here you know, late with kids and working with kids and helping kids out and um, and it's not in



terms of academics. I think it's helping them out you know, with, with problems or ah, you know, with extra curricular um, ah, activities. So I think there is a willingness to go above, above and beyond but I think it is, I think it is a mixed bag. I think it's a mixed bag. But you know, it's hard; it's hard too for someone like myself. When you have a family, you want to go home and be able to spend as much time with them as you can. Particularly when you get paid the level you get paid in the Catholic school, it kind of lends itself to how far am I gonna go? I think, I think that plays a part into it too.

*Respondent 3.*

Yes. Absolutely. Yea, the teachers really want them to succeed. I think the students have a hard time believing that at times, that we we're because you know, we want them to do well because we care, and you that, I gotten well you're just here for the money. Well that's certainly not true. Yea, but they absolutely do. I think, and I think the students begin to realize that.

*Respondent 4.*

Yea, a lot, vastly. Not everyone obviously, you know what I mean? It's definitely a personal issue and I think the other thing is that it's, it's generational. Um, the younger teachers I think do it more because the older teachers have done it for such a long time that they've just kind of phased out of it, you know. So, you know when you hear the older teachers talk about what they did it's a lot of times referenced, like in 87 I was so

close to this one kid that we did this but I don't see them establishing that type of relationship with kids now. But it's very similar to the relationships let's say I would establish with a kid right now. But yeah above and beyond, you know...

*Respondent 5.*

I think so. Um, and I think sometimes you know it's almost a difficulty...like you can bend over backwards too much. But um no I mean there's lots of times you know where you'll teachers here in the morning, you'll see teachers here after school you know where's um, there's study things going on or extra help or um giving the kid the benefit of the doubt um. Yeah.

*Respondent 6.*

I can honestly say knowing, you know being here the number years knowing you know a lot of these people for that time I would say the majority of the staff here will go the extra mile for the students...absolutely...absolutely.

*Respondent 7.*

I would say the majority would. Um, I see teachers spending time with students in the class after school. I see them coming in early meeting with student to give um, them extra help. I see them meeting with students on their lunch hours, ah, working with them.

So I would say ah, I'm satisfied in that area. I see them being very ah, considerate of students. If they know a student uh, has been ill or maybe having some kind of a personal problem and they schedule a test, as uh, a matter of fact just recently, I experienced a uh, a student who had ...there 's a terrible situation at home and uh, came in the next day and said to the teacher um, we had a pretty tough time last night and I knew this to be true and I just watched from a distance and the teacher said uh ok um do the best you can on the test today. If I feel that you could've done better I'll give you a retest. It was a consideration.

*Respondent 8.*

I have to say I am in awe of this faculty. I, I like them a lot. They're nice people. They're not complainers. Um, you know, I know plenty goes on in the faculty room. But that's why God invented faculty rooms. But for the most part I think they really buy into the whole mission, the whole thing we're about here and they want, they want the kids to well.

*Respondent 9.*

Teachers are here early in the morning for extra help, they'll meet with kids during lunch periods. They'll meet with them after school. Yes.

*Question 9*

Who makes the follow-up calls to parents when students are absent? At what time of the day does this occur? (Bryk & Driscoll, 1998).

*Respondent 1.*

The calls are made by the secretary. They are made first thing after attendance is taken.

*Respondent 2.*

The calls are made by the secretary in the morning.

*Respondent 3.*

Yeah, the secretary. First, I believe it runs into second period.

*Respondent 4.*

They do. (They do?) They do know who makes the call. There're done as soon as homeroom ends. It is the very first possible thing that the secretary...it is her first responsibility to make sure that the attendance is taken correctly, the attendance sheet is distributed, and then she just goes down the attendance sheet and starts calling.

*Respondent 5.*

Um, the office calls um, in the morning once kids are absent just to like confirm absences.

*Respondent 6.*

Um, I'm not, I know the ah, Dean of Students is responsible for that. I 'm not sure of he himself personally or of he has the, the secretary in the office do that. Uh, I get the sense that it's done in the least probably by 9:00, 9:30...probably by 9:00. Um, I'm only guessing with that though because I'm, I'm usually not in the office to see any of that going on.

*Respondent 7.*

We have the main office who does that. One of the secretaries does it. And, and the amusing part is uh, what you do when they do call is many times uh the parents will say oh gee really? He/she isn't in school? No, I sent him off to school.

*Respondent 8.*

Ah, the secretary generally calls in, in the morning. Of course everyone has a machine, a beeper, a cell phone, you know, so you don't always get through. But the

secretary calls and if we have suspicious calls, she's been doing that for 17 years, so she alerts the Dean of Students and then we get on the case.

*Respondent 9.*

Follow-up calls are uh, made by the office staff, um under the direction of the Dean of Students.

*Question 10*

Are teachers involved in the decision-making process in areas such as curriculum, discipline, and the budget? (Bachus, 1992).

*Respondent 1.*

(Curriculum) Um, you know the chair, and the other teachers in the department, yea when it's time to decide something in the department, it's not authoritative, this is what we're going to do you know. The chair might throw out suggestions... this is what I think we might do. What do you guys feel about it? But yea we work through it um and a good example of that is actually, is just uh this, this past uh, year. We, we evaluated ourselves and came up with what we were missing or, or what we felt that we ourselves were lacking as a department and we decided that we need to concentrate or push a

certain area of our content. The kids were not getting uh, this area. Uh, that in this school it's really our department that going to end up to, to, to teach that to the kids. And then we came up with a way to do it. And that was a decision made by the department as a whole. That wasn't the chair telling us or the principal telling us you know, this what you guys are lacking. This is something we sat down in a meeting and, and, and we came up with uh this is the problem, this is what we're going to do, we have to have at least one lesson in this area every week or every two weeks. Uh, we came up with a folder for our papers in this area so we're keeping a record and, and we know we're following through on it.

(Discipline) Um, as far as, you know we have our faculty meetings. There're pretty open. I mean, if somebody had something to discuss at any point someone could really bring it up and if they had any question or something or something that they, they needed help with...plus what I said before you know, the administration you know, if you really had some serious problems with the class you could call them into the class. They'd come into that class and, and help, you know, figure it out. Um...you know, they got no problem with you if, if kids are that bad for that day, you know, if you have the kid come out of class for whatever reason that they just, you know, who knows...they're just not being...who knows? You know...things that are life threatening to them... Faculty meeting are open...so.

(Budget) Um...No I can't really say. I can't think of any time I had really any input into it...into the budget.

*Respondent 2.*

(Curriculum) Yes. We ah, in our department um, we absolutely we have an excellent department head. She's just; she is such a great lady. I mean, she really lets her teachers just teach. You know, and she wants them involved in the decision making process, and she, and um, you know, she's very easy to work for. And she helps, she really gets us involved in the curriculum planning and we have done that. We've really focused...particularly Middle States. We had to really focus on areas of the curriculum that are weak and what we want to sure up and how we're going to go about doing that. So we've really had to, like in the last two years, we've had a lot of um, active participation in ah, revamping the curriculum.

(Discipline) No. I don't think I, I haven't ah, I haven't um, trying to think...no I haven't noticed that.

(Budget) Laugh... If I had input in the budget I would be definitely staying here next year. No questions asked because the salaries would be raised. So...no.

### *Respondent 3.*

(Curriculum) Yeah, we're actually creating a curriculum as we speak. Ah we're rewriting the whole curriculum, obviously. It's a process, you know. But that's what we've been for the whole year. The concentration is in curriculum writing um, we had a specialist come in and talk about how to do more outcomes based curriculum stuff. Um, and then you now I guess the biggest things is the core content standards. We want to be aligned with the core content standards so it's rewriting the whole curriculum so that um, the curriculum is in line with our mission statement, and our ultimate outcome goals and



they satisfy the core content standards. So they're allowing each teacher to write their curriculum. So...I would say um, yeah there's flexibility there's no doubt about it.

(Discipline) Um, yeah, there's a panel, um, again I think that happens more um, on, on a more um, a more personal level. It's seems like different people in different conversations that are off the record offer what they think or feel about certain things and there's kind of, it kind of creates like a tone and, and it becomes clear to the administration you know, um, kind of the mood of the faculty, the mood of the staff, what, where they kind of want to see things moving towards. Um, so there'd definitely time that and they did, they did put aside time last year at the end of the year to address it officially. But um, I think that's all it was...official. I think the decision was made before that um, throughout the course of the year. Obviously it did not pertain to anything throughout the course of the year. So, it's going to happen at the end of the year. So as the year progresses, as the conversations happen, you know let's say a teacher has a specific problem and it becomes an actual discipline incident that exists over and over and over um, they might start creating more of a dialogue with the assistant principal for discipline, you know casual dialogue that happens couple times in the course of a year, this principal will take that information with him to the end of the year and say like, alright this is kind of what's happening for a teacher. We didn't address it 6 months ago when we had these conversations but we need to address it this summer so we can create the policy for next year. So, yeah so I think their voice is heard.

(Budget) No. No of course, everyone has a budget no doubt about it. Everyone's told how much it is um, again so less much bureaucracy than obviously like any public school so a lot of it happens on more of a personal level. If you have a good personal relationship

with the people that get to control the money and they have a faith in you as a person, um, you can get stuff passed which is so much better than having to deal with a bureaucracy but in the same sense the only um, hesitation is there's less checks and balances in the sense that if you personally piss somebody off um, um, on a personal level that has nothing to do with it than the backlash might be when you go to ask for money to deal with a certain event whether the event's good or not good, they're not turning down the event, they're turning down you. Do you know what I mean? So, you know, that's, that's kind of how I feel. That's the positive and negative of, um, of a more intimate family kind of setting. You know. Um, but the budget is obviously like um, very controlled. I guess the interesting factor is we doubled our enrollment for the freshman class from 70-160 and um, we'll see now. You know what I mean? Now that's there's just infinitely more kids that might be coming and if you start creating a program where's there's 150-160 kids in a class, getting a much bigger school might create much more resources. So, I think the budget was much stricter when it had to be.

*Respondent 4.*

Um, definitely involved in terms of curriculum, um that's like an ongoing thing, ah, both in departments and school-wide.

Discipline? Um, in, in, a certain sense yes. Like when, when, we have monthly faculty meetings like you know varying parts of discipline are always part, like you know what do you terms of uniform violation, this or that. Um, so I say yes to a certain extent. There is our, a plan in place. I mean it's a very structured disciplinary plan of what you get

detentions for and when you get so many detentions, social probation and you know all these kinds of things. That's already set up so like we don't have too much to do about that. But it's more like you now what deserves it, you know. Does the untucked shirt get it or...

And then the budget, um, I would say only in the micro...in the certain sense that like departments have a certain budget and they get to make choices within that. But the overall budget planning thing? I don't think so, I mean if we have needs we can certainly make those needs uh, you know known. But I don't in terms of the whole big overall picture.

*Respondent 5*

Curriculum? Yes. The others? No.

*Respondent 6.*

Uh, budget? No. Absolutely not. Ah, curriculum? On a department level we certainly have input on what um, as a department we will be doing. Um and the third area was? (Discipline) Discipline such as putting together new rules and policies and so forth? (yes) We will certainly discuss, if, if a teacher or group of teachers has a, a particular issue or problem that would like to discuss usually we will bring that up at a faculty meeting and usually the answer we get from the administration is we'll look into it. Um, so certainly issues about discipline might be brought up for discussion but ultimately I

think the decision of whether this is going to change or not is the administration is going to make that final decision. It's not a group of faculty and administration that sit around a table and say all right this what we're going to do. It's ultimately administration.

*Respondent 7.*

(Curriculum) We try to do that yes. Uh I encourage um, the departments to ah, to look at their curriculums, to adapt it to meet the needs of the students. For example, in English they wanted to put in a ah, an AP course for juniors. So I asked for rationale and they provided me with one. So I said ok let's give it ah, a one-year trial. Well we had it this year. It worked out very successfully. We're putting it back again next year. And then ah, just the reverse. We had ah, one course that in science the chairperson felt it was no longer functioning the way it should and wasn't meeting the needs of the students. She met with her people and they decided to remove it and put something else in its place.

(Discipline) I would say ah, we take suggestions um, yes and no. It's, it's not a formal process it's more an informal process. But for example we revised our lateness policy because some of the teachers had brought forth ah, some issues that they were concerned with. So we did, we did change that policy in the student handbook.

*Respondent 8.*

Ah, yeah. I'll take each of them individually. Curriculum... we have an academic counsel which is, has traditionally been the chairs of the departments. Now they'll, they'll meet with the Vice-Principal for Academics and she does a lot of it, you know, it's like a

think tank almost. Now the ideal is that they're talking to their departments and it filters that way. Lots of times people will just say to the Vice-Principal what do you think about this or what about that? But generally it's the academic counsel that where they have real, some real input into the curriculum. Um, we're in flux of right in terms of chairs. I think we're going to do something different, maybe clusters or it's in process so that, that group still meets once a month and they talk over curriculum. We just made a decision to test all our freshman and sophomore using the Terra Nova next year. That came from them. They researched different tests. They did...because we want to get what they kids know and want to do like a program analysis also. So, um, that's where curriculum goes.

(Budget) Finances? Um, actually they would probably tell you they don't have much to say in the finances cause there weren't any. So, actually no, they don't. Each department has a budget and it's funny when I first came here the previous, the school was in a bad financial strait. So the previous principal did all kinds of cutting and I used to say it was like the depression. So when I first came they said to me, well my budget is whatever. Can I really spend that? And I said why are you asking me that? Well we were never allowed to spend it before. So they're not in the habit of spending. Um, but each department has a budget and yeah, I always tell them if, if you're going to use it you can get it. Don't; please order something that you're not going to use. You know? So, I can't think of an example where somebody would've said well I need something. Now, they're all going to say we need another teacher in our department to lower class size, you know. But those are financial constraints that I don't even have control over. You know? But if they tell me they're going to use it you know, they, they can have it.

(Discipline) Three years ago when, when I first came we as a group, as a faculty, we wrote the discipline code. And so what happens is that, that code went into place and ah, they all had input into it, some had greater input than others, you know, and there were the ones that bellyached. But for the most part, everybody on the faculty at that time had that. Um, if they referred a kid to the office the, the understanding is that once it goes to the office than it's the teacher's, disciplinarian's role to deal with it and there's communication back and forth. But I think they would say that they feel comfortable going in and talking to the Dean and saying this is what happened and often he'll get the kid and the teacher together and you know, that kind of thing.

*Respondent 9.*

Teachers are involved in curriculum. Uh, the area of discipline uh, is discussed at faculty meetings. Uh, budget is really based on need and uh, if a department presents uh, a valid need to me for more money in their budget, I certainly ah, will make strides to take care of that.

*Question 11*

Are there ample opportunities for staff development, both in-house and out? What are some of them? (Fine & Somerville, 1998).

*Respondent 1.*

Yea we actually just had a workshop on the uh, on an area pertinent to my content. We watched a video on that and we've had people come in uh at other days or teacher days and come in and, and, give us, uh, give us talks or show us how we can use group work more effectively and, and things like that. Yea, Yea, you can put in for a professional day. I personally haven't but I know ah, several teachers that have ah to go away to meetings and conferences in different areas for their majors.

*Respondent 2.*

Yes. We've had opportunities ah; opportunities come along in our mailbox for workshops. Last year we had a, a workshop at another high school um, that we went to and we actually just had a um development ah, a faculty ah, development ah, day ah, a couple of weeks ago. My department actually was the focus of it. We are trying to implement a particular movement into another content's curriculum. And we had to show videotape on this movement and we, we as a department focused on how we can connect this movement to the other content area's curriculum. So we just did a staff development day um, you know, in, in a faculty meeting setting. That's another thing by the way...the faculty meetings when you talk about how you show your appreciation to your staff. The principal puts the faculty meetings on Fridays and he makes Fridays a half a day for the faculty meetings. So you know what? You're more willing to work at the faculty meetings. You're more willing to pay attention to the staff development days because it's a half a day. So you're in a better mood, you don't feel like oh you know, it's, it's, it's

3:00 and I'm you know, stuck in this ah, faculty meeting and I wanna get home. So, but we've had, yea there're been, they're been opportunities with the staff development days and um, you know, whether it's outside of school or in school.

*Respondent 3.*

I've been on one. But if I asked to go someplace? I'm sure it wouldn't be a problem. We do. For our curriculum we had um, someone come in and speak with us on curriculum development. I did one locally and we were invited to the national one. If we wanted to go they would pay for it.

*Respondent 4.*

Yeah, um I don't see it a lot. I see it in the context of what like um, the school said it was important that we start instituting technology so they people in charge of technology are sent out. It's not necessarily self-generated, like a person has an interest in something and they want...but yeah, I mean I, I would say like you know if it's a viable reason and it's presented correctly and stuff like that than yeah, I mean... like if I needed continuing ed credits and I want to go to a particular workshop, can I present it to the principal? Will it get approved? I would have the confidence that it would and they would pay for it. I have confidence that would happen.



*Respondent 5.*

Yeah, um I don't see it a lot. I see it in the context of what like um, the school said it was important that we start instituting technology so they people in charge of technology are sent out. It's not necessarily self-generated, like a person has an interest in something and they want...but yeah, I mean I, I would say like you know if it's a viable reason and it's presented correctly and stuff like that than yeah, I mean... like if I needed continuing ed credits and I want to go to a particular workshop, can I present it to the principal? Will it get approved? I would have the confidence that it would and they would pay for it. I have confidence that would happen.

*Respondent 6.*

I could honestly say no to that. Um, in the school no. My, my wife is in teaching for a public school and I know she complains all the time, gee you guys never have any professional development there. Um, outside of school? I, I know um, you know, I know the principal is good with that if where, where if I come across a, a particular conference and say you know, look it I need 2 days off and you know could you foot the, the bill on this or maybe, you know, you know take a \$100 dollars you know or would the school the school pay me \$50 for it? You know, I know the principal will definitely uh, uh, consider that and if it seems to be a worthwhile, will not block you from going. Will let you take the days off and will probably ah, kick in with some ah, help.

*Respondent 7.*

Ah, not as much as there should be. Ah, because I, I, I inherited a deficit in my budget I had to really curtail much of it. We are slowly bringing it back as my budget starts to ah, become more balanced. We have had several in-service professional activities not a much as we should have and I think I have to improve in that area.

*Respondent 8.*

We yes, do both. Um, I would say most of our staff development in this place, in the epos of this place; I don't think had encouraged a lot of it. Um, so we try to do something at every faculty meeting. This year it's curriculum stuff. That in it's own way...just getting them to state what an outcome is for their course is a major thing. That an assessment is not just you know, they're trying to, that there's other ways to, so you know. So we're you know, trying to stretch them a little bit in that way. But last year we spent all of our...the first half of the year was on learning disabilities and how to cope with kids. We have a program for learning disabled kids here. Um, but they go one period a day to a learning disabilities teacher. It's academic support, social skills; uh study skills, organizational skills and self-advocacy. But they're also mainstreamed in the regular curriculum, so how do you deal with that? They really took to this I mean, they are wonderful, wonderful, ah, because they were frustrated all these years trying to deal with these kids. The second half of the year we did on technology. And of course you know you always see more of it being used but not enough. It's never enough. So we try to keep it that way. We... if the teacher wants to go out and go to something, we always

make it available to them. Um we try to send the AP teachers to you know, courses those kinds of things. Um, yeah we try and get them out.

*Respondent 9.*

Yes, particularly ah, over the past few years we have been focusing on technology and integration of technology into curriculum and we have provided workshops in-house, ah, the diocese has provided workshops, and I encourage them to participate in workshops that, that they get in the mail.

*Question 12*

Are teachers, students, and administrators proud of their school? How is this demonstrated? (Hoy, 1998).

*Respondent 1.*

I think the teachers and administrators are. Uh, uh, the students? Um, you know, students, I think they are but I think if you asked them I think you know, they got that um, that, that cool thing going on. You know, I like, you know, we're not proud of the school, you know, we don't want to be here. But I think you now, honestly if another school were to come in you know. I think if you go to the sporting events you'll see that you know, they're rooting our kids on, they're rooting against the other team and so

they're, they're definitely proud. You might not you know, if you were just going to listen to 'em in the hallways or something talk you know, I think you get the typical, what you get in any school. You know, um, you know, we'd rather be sitting home, you know, rather be over here or over there. But...

Teacher's and administrator are definitely, you know. I don't think, you won't hear anyone even no...If we didn't want to be here we wouldn't have to be here, you know. We could leave. There's no... My parents aren't making me teach at this school.

*Respondent 2.*

I, I do. As, as, a whole. As a whole I do. Like I said we have that split in the faculty, but as a whole I do. The kids won't admit it a lot of times ok, but I you know, they, because that's corny to admit anything like that. But, I think, I think that they carry themselves um, in a way that indicates to me that they are proud of the place. Um, and I think the administration has tried to instill that and ah, I think you know, many people on the faculty are proud of it. I know, I know I'm proud of the place. I enjoy, I enjoy working here. Um, you know, it's like I said it's it's not certainly a suburban school um, it's certainly no, like an upper middle class Catholic school. But ah, it's, it's a good place. I think the kids have a chance here to succeed better than they would you know, where they would be.

*Respondent 3.*

Oh, absolutely. I think they're, you know proud, the kids are proud to go here. And um, it's shown by their school pride. Their you know, willingness to, to go out and recruit. Their willingness to be here on Sunday's and talk to them, um, and I think when they go out I think they're proud to say they go here because it's reputation is building and that's you now, obvious in, in our increase in enrollment which I hope, I definitely hope our enrollment increases and that I also, that it stays small. But at the same time I don't want to see overly selective. So...I mean, it's a catch 22. But I think they're proud. I mean, I'm proud to work here. Um, I think, I think the faculty is also.

*Respondent 4.*

Um, ok I would say overall the resounding chorus would be yes. But knowing intimately the different people um, and what they'd say and how they live their life in a daily way, I'm going to say at times, no. Um, that's there a lot of room for improvement. Um, the kids are um, proud of the school um, but are looking for um, more always you now. Um, and, and to be honest, they should look for more. Um, because when I first got here, from the time I first got here till now there's been so much change, so many things added for the better. I mean just stuff to do, you know things that were like a part of their experience here; as opposed to just coming and going seven periods and then going home. You know um, so, um, you know I think the kids are starting to latch onto more of that pride in their school. They're here all the time. You know if you ask the kids to volunteer for something, then a hundred of them will volunteer for it. Um, they wear their colors,

they do wear stuff that says the school, on it um...they talk about it you know, like if you ask a kid where they go to school they're not going to say somewhere else. They'll say here. Um, but they'll still looking for more. You know, they're looking for, for um, more experiences and more of the stuff they know happens at other schools and that want to see happen here.

The teachers...are, so vastly different because I know all of them personally so it's hard to speak on all of them. Um some people are definitely proud of the school, others um, I can't tell whether or not it's the culture of education that everyone just seems jaded and like their job is the most stressful in the world and they can't wait for every vacation to come. Um, so are they proud of their school? Yeah. I think that the culture of the school changes obviously. Um, it used to be um, you know, less than, like I would say 15 years ago in terms of a boy's school then co-ed school um, kinda around that time that that was happening it was turning from a white school to a black school um. It's turned from one city to another city school. Um, and just like a lot of elements that go along with that, um I think it creates more frustration. You know like they want to have a class, they want to have a lot of kids here that are like just going to do what they're supposed to do. And if they don't do what they're supposed to do they want to make a phone call home and for that to be an effective intervention. And they get frustrated when that doesn't work because the parent is like I'm dealing with my own s---...like leave me alone you know. Um, they wanna, um, they want things to go smoothly when they're not gonna necessarily. So, um I think that they would be more proud if they thought that the product of the kid that was here was a better product. I think they would think better if the kids were um, smarter for whatever that means, in the sense that they tested better. If they

were um, less interested in certain parts of culture, hip-hop culture or you now um just nuances I think that they would feel more proud of it. But, and I think, I think they would feel more proud if um, their specific problems with administration were dealt with. Um again, that's different people for different reasons. Um, so those specific things being said, that's the reality of it. Overall if you asked any them they would give you the yes I'm very proud. Um, and again filtering in like I said before, if you have to go the kids and what they're saying? I have to filter what they teachers say and they show up every day and they teach their classes and they don't look like you know, they're going to shoot themselves. So, you know, I think a lot of it's bitching, you know a lot of it's complaining and it's just like venting and you just have to move past it and understand that it's not really representative of how they really feel. You know they like coming and stuff like that Um, I think the administration is more and more proud um, but I think that sometimes they fall victim to the same um, nuances that the teachers do. Um, it's easier to be proud of a kid who is very intelligent and has plans of going to Harvard and doesn't ever get in trouble and volunteers for everything and you know, perfect children are easier to be proud of supposedly. So um, they get lost sometimes in, in the frustration of dealing with the type of population that we have. But um, they're, they're proud of the overall product and definitely proud of where the schools moving. Um, obviously an increase in enrollment, increase in programs that are being offered, um the increased energy of a faculty, with the younger faculty coming in, and kind of sprucing things up a little bit. And I think it's a direct result of their work you know, that's why they're proud because it's their creation.

*Respondent 5.*

Um, I think so. Um, in one of the things that I've noticed ah, since I've gotten here is like we have this little, like when you first come in the front door there's an office of development...and ah one of the things they've added are the school shirts, hats, sweatshirts and things and ah, um, on Friday it's always been the policy that um, you could wear a sweatshirt, if it was a school sweatshirt and it's like all of a sudden everybody has a school sweatshirt. And um, I think that that says something that people actually want to have like on their car or on their person something that says you know the school that they go to.

*Respondent 6.*

Um, that's a tough question. Um...yeah that's funny I just had a student last period who said this school sucks. Uh, so...I mean you certainly get that, this school sucks. Um, can you repeat the question? (Question repeated) I think certainly when, when you know when the entire student body gets together...um we just had two weeks ago a week called spirit week, um. When you know, you see the whole student body together working on activities together, having fun, everybody both faculty and students are, whether it's out in the field enjoying themselves or whatever...yeah I mean I would say you get a sense that um, you know the kids are happy to be here, you know the staff is happy to be here um. You know I don't find as much grumbling here amongst the staff as, I mean I have limited experience in public school, I, I have friends who, who are public school teachers and I don't know, I don't know if it's because we're not a union



situation here and, and all of that...I don't know I, I just don't hear the, the grumbling amongst the staff. Uh, I think, I think we have a pretty devoted and dedicated group of teachers here. Um, and, and ultimately everybody has you know worked pretty hard to, to build a reputation of the school and to, and to then have something to look back upon and, and, and to, to say we're, we're proud of it. Um, you know ah, instances when the ah, ah, like with the um, drama program and when you see the hard work that the kids do uh, put into it and the dedication of that staff who has you know has you know given tireless hours to, to putting the show together and the, the kids who have performed. You know I think you can sit back and, and feel pretty proud of the place that we're doing some good stuff here. Um, you know we have several instances throughout the year where we will raise money for ah, a charity. Ah, a lot of them are student lead as well. A student group will get together and ah, you know will help a group in the community or um, during the spring we have a project where we raise money for the poor and um, you know they raise thousands of dollars. And um, I think that's something that, that we can be pretty proud of as well.

*Respondent 7.*

I believe they are. First of all whenever the students go out of the school, whether it be on retreat or at a game or something I always get positive feedback. Recently the juniors just went on a retreat. I got a letter from the retreat house saying that these students were exemplary and model and they could come back anytime. Um, whenever I um, you have to see if I bring a group of students ah, to ah, a funeral mass, one of the

parents may have passed away. You have to see the reverence and, and the attitude. There is an inherent pride ah, some students are very reserved about it and other students are very vocal about it. But when it comes time for you to depend on them they're always there for you.

Respondent 8.

Mmm...well, let me start with students just we just finished spirit week and that was a huge success. That was the first time we did it. Ah, I would say the kids now, I don't know if three years ago if you would have said that. We had a big retention problem here. And I used to say the kids just don't love the place enough, you know? Um, I don't know, if that, that would be true now. We have a lot of positive stuff. I think just our enrollment next year indicates that the kids themselves talk the place up... that the spirit week thing was definitely um, a huge thing. Um, there's a, I've heard kids say you know that in other places that going here is kind of like a, a elite prep school to them. You know those kinds of things. Um, so I think the kids themselves although they don't always demonstrate it with their behavior on the bus, you know. I have to talk to them about that every once in a while. Uh, but I think for the most part that they are proud of the school. Uh, I think they like coming. Uh, when a kid does transfer they're sad. You know, there's a sadness whereas before I can't wait to get out of here. So, the fact that they get...I always...5:30, I tell them go home to your mothers, go, goodbye, you know, they're always here. The lobby will be filled with kids, you know, there's kids all over

the building. It's a liability but I'd rather that than you know, the other extreme. So, I think that's one way.

Um, I think the teachers uh; I think the teachers are becoming believers. Like that if you, if you strive for excellence, you get it, I think you know. Again you know, there's always degrees but um, they show up everyday. I'm not saying that facetiously. You know, that they show up. So um, some people have never been absent. That's not universal but some people have never been absent. And they're not here cause they're making a lot of money. So, you know, there's, there's something about the, the mission and the whole what we're trying to do here. I just got the letters of intent back. Out of the entire faculty, two have indicated that they're not sure that they're coming back. They said to me I probably will. But they're not sure. So out of 35 people... So, I think just showing up you know, it gets them out of bed in the morning, um...

And how does administration, uh? I think just our own enthusiasm for the...I mean at seeing what can be done and setting the tone and being consistent and telling the kids that you can do this. This is a good combination right now.

*Respondent 9.*

Well, certainly I think the answer to that question is yes. Otherwise why are you here? Ah, I certainly wouldn't want anyone on the faculty that isn't proud of the school. Uh, that would certainly be obvious in the way they interact and how they, they are a part of this ah, community. Ah, I think it's very, very evident when we have an open house with youngsters coming in to see the school and their parents. Uh, all teachers are

required to be present. Ah, and we have ah, departmental tables set up and people can go from table to table to talk about curriculum with them and I think on that particular occasion ah, people do see and, and it's very clear how much faculty is involved in the school and how proud they are of, of the institution that we have.

### Analysis of Overall Responses

In chapter two the literature examined on the culture within a small school environment was presented in five distinct categories: (1) climate of small schools, (2) relationship of students and teachers in small schools, (3) academic success of students in small schools, (4) teacher performance in small schools, and (5) student absenteeism and drop out rates in small schools. This section presented an analysis of the responses of the nine respondents.

The following questions were presented to the interviewees under category one (1) of climate in small schools:

1. How many incidents occur involving the use of drugs? Alcohol? Weapons? Physical Disturbances? Please explain. (Klonsky, 2000b).
2. Describe the atmosphere in the school? Is it one of feeling safe and secure? (Meier, 1998).
5. How can you tell that students and teachers/administrators are respectful to each other? (Cotton, 1996b).

In question 1, all nine respondents answered that their schools were free from drugs, alcohol, weapons, and physical disturbances. In question 2, all nine respondents felt that their schools were safe and secure. The same held true for question 5. All nine respondents agreed that students, teachers, and administrators are respectful to each other.

In summary, this researcher found that all respondents agreed that their schools have no drug or alcohol traffic, nor are weapons carried or physical disturbances a common occurrence. All nine respondents agreed that students, teachers, and administrators are respectful to each other. This is in direct agreement with the literature reviewed.

The following question was presented to the interviewees under category two (2) of the relationship of students and teachers in small schools:

6. Do students feel comfortable when speaking to teachers? Administration? Do they greet each other outside of class? Please explain. (Gottfredson, 1985; Clinchy, 1998).

Five out of six teachers and all three administrators agreed that their students feel comfortable when speaking to teachers and administrators. This is in direct agreement to the literature reviewed.

The following questions were presented to the interviewees under category three (3) of academic success in small schools:

3. What type of co and extra curricular activities are students involved in? Is it a large percent of the student body? Can staff regularly be seen at these activities?  
(Bank Street College of Education, 2000).
7. Is the curriculum college preparatory minded? Does it stress higher order thinking skills? Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

All nine respondents answered that they had a variety of both co and extra curricular activities and that a large percent of their student body participated in them. In regards to the second half of the question that asked about staff attendance respondent 1 stated that a job at night was an issue so attendance was impossible. Respondents 2 and 6 stated that attendance was not possible due to the distance that is traveled to and from school each day. Respondents 3, 4, 5, and 8 indicated that attendance by the staff is good. Respondent 7 said the attendance by the younger staff is good. Respondent 9 stated that the staff does not attend as much as they would like.

All nine respondents agreed that their schools' curriculum was college preparatory. Respondent 1 stated that the teacher's expectations were almost too high. Respondent 2, 6, 8, and 9 replied that the expectations were not high enough. Respondent 3 answered that some teacher's expectations were high while others were not. Respondents 4, 5, and 7 said the expectations were high.

In summary, four of the six teachers and two of the three administrators stated that their teachers' expectations do not match that of the curriculum taught. This was highly unexpected and in direct contradiction of the literature reviewed.

The following questions were presented to the interviewees under category four (4) of teacher performance in small schools:

4. Is the administration readily available and supportive to the staff? Do they receive praise? Do they feel appreciated? Describe. Is the morale of the staff good? Describe some of the planned activities to help keep the morale high. (Gottfredson, 1985).
8. How far will teachers go to help students? Do they go the "extra mile?" (Gottfredson, 1985).
10. Are teachers involved in the decision-making process in areas such as curriculum, discipline, and the budget? (Bachus, 1992).
11. Are there ample opportunities for staff development, both in-house and out? What are some of them? (Fine & Somerville, 1998).

In question 4, teacher respondents 1, 2, 3, and 5 agreed that they feel supported and receive praise on a regular basis from the administration. Respondent 4 and 6 felt that it fluctuates. When things are going well you are praised. When things are bad you could

be in trouble. Respondent 1 and 5 agreed that the morale of the staff is good while respondents 2,3,4, and 6 felt it fluctuates throughout the year. Administrator respondents 7, 8, and 9 all felt that they give praise to their staff and that they feel supported. They also agreed that the morale was good.

All nine respondents felt that the teachers are involved in the decision making process as far as curriculum and discipline are concerned. All six teachers agreed that they have no say in decisions made about budget. The three administrators agreed that their staffs have no say in the area.

All nine respondents agreed that there are ample opportunities for staff development both in and out of house.

In summary, three out of three teachers agreed that the staff is involved in decision-making and the morale of their staff. This is in direct contradiction to the literature reviewed.

The following question was presented to the interviewees under category (5) of student absenteeism and drop out rate in small schools:

9. Who makes the follow-up calls to parents when students are absent? At what time of the day does this occur? (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988).

In response to question 9 all respondents knew that who made follow-up phone calls home in reference to students who are absent. They also knew what time they were made.



This researcher found that all respondents responded that their schools had a better than average attendance rate and a better than average drop out rate. This is in direct agreement to the literature reviewed.

The following question was asked inclusive of all five areas:

12. Are teachers, students, and administrators proud of their school? How is this demonstrated? (Hoy, 1998).

All nine respondents agreed that teachers, students, and administrators are proud of their school.

The conclusions arrived at from the interviews with the three administrators did not surprise this researcher. All three administrators in every category except one supported the literature finding.

#### Summary of Chapter IV

Chapter four opened with an introduction followed by an organization of the analysis, including the interview questions. It continued with a presentation of the overall responses. This was composed of the responses from the nine subjects interviewed both face-to-face and by phone. An analysis of the overall responses followed. It ended with a summary of the chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

#### Introduction

This final chapter of this study presented a summary as well as conclusions and recommendations that resulted from the analysis as given in Chapter IV. This chapter was divided into five sections: (a) introduction, (b) summary of the study, including the research questions: (c) conclusions of the research made up of School Culture, Positive School Climate, Relationship Between Teacher and Student, Academic Success of

Students, Teacher Performance, and Student Absenteeism and Dropout Rates, (d) recommendations for administrators, and (e) recommendations for further research.

### Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the perceptions of principals and teachers of the culture within a small school environment. The amount of violence, high student dropout rate, low overall achievement, and poor student and teacher moral seen in high schools prompted this researcher to conduct this study.

### Research Questions

The research questions for this study were:

1. How many incidents occur involving the use of drugs? Alcohol? Weapons? Physical Disturbances? Please explain. (Klonsky, 2000b).
2. Describe the atmosphere in the school? Is it one of feeling safe and secure? (Meier, 1998).
3. What type of co and extra curricular activities are students involved in? Is it a large percent of the student body? Can staff regularly be seen at these activities? (Bank Street College of Education, 2000).
4. Is the administration readily available and supportive to the staff? Do they receive praise? Do they feel appreciated? Describe. Is the morale of the staff good?

Describe some of the planned activities to help keep the morale high. (Gottfredson, 1985).

5. How can you tell that students and teachers/administrators are respectful to each other? (Cotton, 1996b).
6. Do students feel comfortable when speaking to teachers? Administration? Do they greet each other outside of class? Please explain. (Gottfredson, 1985; Clinchy, 1998).
7. Is the curriculum college preparatory minded? Does it stress higher order thinking skills? Do teachers' expectations of their students match the rigor of the curriculum? (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).
8. How far will teachers go to help students? Do they go the "extra mile?" (Gottfredson, 1985).
9. Who makes the follow-up calls to parents when students are absent? At what time of the day does this occur? (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988).
10. Are teachers involved in the decision-making process in areas such as curriculum, discipline, and the budget? (Bachus, 1992).
11. Are there ample opportunities for staff development, both in-house and out? What are some of them? (Fine & Somerville, 1998).
12. Are teachers, students, and administrators proud of their school? How is this demonstrated? (Hoy, 1998).

### Conclusions

The subjects for the face-to-face interviews responded to questions asked by the researcher. Each subject signed a consent form indicating that they would remain anonymous. The interview process was completed at an agreed upon time between the subjects and the researcher as to not interfere with student instruction.

The subjects for the phone interviews responded to the same questions over the phone. Each subject signed a consent form indicating that they would remain anonymous. The phone interview process was completed at an agreed upon time between the subjects and the researcher as to not interfere with student instruction. In both the face-to-face interviews and phone interviews, a recording device was employed. Subjects were informed at the time consent was given.

Chapter IV gave a presentation of the data collected in this study. The conclusions and recommendations for future research are contained in Chapter V.

### Conclusions of the Investigation

Category 1 encompassed questions concerning climate in small schools. Specifically it included questions 1, 2, and 5.

Category 2 encompassed questions concerning the relationship between students and teachers in small schools. Specifically it included question 6.

Category 3 encompassed questions concerning academic success in small schools. Specifically it included questions 3 and 7.

Category 4 encompassed questions concerning teacher performance in small schools. Specifically it included questions 4, 8, and 10.

Category 5 encompassed questions concerning student absenteeism and drop out rate. Specifically it included question 9.

Question 12 encompassed all categories. It asked about school pride in regards to students, teachers, and administrators.

In conducting this qualitative research six teachers were interviewed. This researcher can affirm that these six teachers found climate (category 1) in small schools to be important. This is consistent with the literature reviewed that has found that small schools are healthy schools. Hoy and Sabo (1998) cite that a healthy school is one where participants want to be rather than forced to be. Students in small schools have a sense of belonging. These teachers agreed that their schools have no drug or alcohol traffic, nor are weapons carried or physical disturbances a common occurrence. This is in agreement with the literature that states that students in small schools commit fewer infractions, major or minor (Mary Raywid, Hofstra University). Small schools have a climate that is orderly, safe and attractive. These teachers are in agreement with the study conducted by Byk, Lee, & Holland (1993), who found that fewer than 5 percent of the teachers reported any of the following problems: students fights in class, students under the influence of alcohol or drugs, physical or verbal abuse of students, or students ridiculing other students.

In conjunction with climate the six teachers agreed that student absenteeism and drop out rate (category 5) were of equal importance. This is constant with the literature

that states that students are more likely to come to school when they get along with adults and when they feel personally expected to come to school every day (Jordon & McPartland, 2001). All six teachers were aware of who calls students when they are absent and what time this is done. Students know this and feel that someone cares and actually misses them when they are not in school. Teachers know students' names due to the low teacher-student ratio. A large number of students in small schools are involved in co and extra curricular activities. They know their absence will more than likely cause a problem for the extra curricular activity they participate in.

This researcher was not surprised when category 2 found five of the six teachers in agreement with the literature studied. Five teachers agreed that students feel comfortable speaking to teachers and administrators both in and out of class. This is in direct agreement with the literature by Cotton (1996b), that in small schools there is an intimate and personal relationship among teachers and students. In small schools teachers know students well. The quality and character of these relationships are important determinants of student learning. Every staff member knows every child's name. There is a greater chance for students to get to interact informally with their teachers. In a small school, students feel like "somebody".

In category 4, the teachers were split specifically in their answers as to whether or not the morale of the staff is high and is the staff involved in the decision making process concerning the budget. According to Bachus (1992), this is in direct contradiction to the literature that tell us that teachers want to be involved in decision-making. According to Bachus (1992), teachers want to be more involved in decisions that affect discipline, curriculum, and expenditures. The teachers agreed that they share the decision-making

when it comes to curriculum and discipline. It was with the budget that they all concurred having no say in. All respondents stated that they have no idea as to the amount of money, if any they have to spend in ordering items at the start of the year and then during the course of the year. They stated they must see the principal and make a case for the material they request. If it is approved they get it. One respondent went as far to say that if you were liked by the administration you would get what you request. If you are on the outs, than more than likely your request will be denied.

Two of the six teachers stated that teacher morale was not good in their school. This is in direct contradiction to the literature reviewed. The literature clearly addressed the question of morale as being important in small schools. The research found morale much higher in schools in which the population became less during the school year. In schools where the population grew during the year, the morale became poorer as the year went on. Two surveys and two case studies found a positive relationship between smaller school size and higher staff morale (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Gottfredson, 1985; Larson, 1991; Oxley, 1989). Yet one respondent indicated that morale was good only if you thought of as a dedicated teacher. That same teacher went on to say the morale was 50-50. Another respondent stated that morale was often times poor because the communication between staff members was poor.

Based on the literature reviewed, this researcher did not expect four of the six teachers interviewed to state that the teacher's expectations in their schools did not match the college preparatory curriculum that is taught. (Category 3) These teachers alluded to the fact that their students are from minority ethnic groups and enter their high schools unprepared to work at the expected level. In fact it was stated by one teacher that



expectations tend to be lowered therefore students do not achieve to their highest potential. One respondent said that their kids "only know so much." Another teacher remarked that although their curriculum is earmarked college preparatory, their students are only being prepared to attend a two-year, not four-year college and the four-year college they would attend was nothing like that of a Harvard. The students were not expected to be able to achieve that level. This is the unspoken expectation by the staff of their students. Another respondent said that the expectations were high but too many of the kids were failing.

It was also unexpected that two of the three administrators interviewed stated that their teachers' expectations did not match that of the curriculum taught. One administrator stated that the younger staff has so much higher expectations than does the seasoned staff. It was thought that the seasoned staff gets tired easier and tends to lower their expectations faster. One simply stated that there were some teachers that were not demanding enough.

These responses were thought to be highly irregular when one reviews the literature that states that students in smaller schools are expected to reach high standards. They are exposed to critical thinking strategies and a broad range of strategies employed by their teachers. According to Lee, Smith, and Croninger (1995) small schools are places where student achievement is found strong, curriculums center on the notion that all students will meet high academic standards and devote considerable effort to academic endeavors. The benefits of students that are exposed to higher order thinking skills are substantial. According to Berliner (1984), a typical student exposed to a lesson without higher-order thinking may be expected to perform at the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile. That

same student when exposed to the lesson with higher intelligent thinking would perform at about the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile.

Suzanne Hall and Carleen Reck conducted a Small Schools Survey of 462 small schools throughout the United States and found 47 principals in agreement that the following academic advantages are to be found in small schools. Students in small schools are exposed to varied materials and tasks. Students in small schools are expected to work in higher levels of thinking. According to the Small Schools Study survey a higher-than-average percentage of teachers give assignments that push students beyond factual information to higher levels of thinking. They expect their students to use a variety of reference materials. In small schools teachers expect their students to have better than good study habits. They learn to work without the teacher for long periods of time. They develop the ability to concentrate and work independently. They are expected to meet the challenges that are presented to them.

Another finding that refutes what was stated by those interviewed is from a study conducted by Lee, Smith, and Croninger (1995). They found the following three components common to small schools. (1) There is a common academic curriculum. Course offerings may be narrow but the academic content and expectations are strong. (2) There are high levels of academic press. The curriculum centers on the notion that all students will meet high academic standards and devote considerable effort to academic endeavors. (3) Teachers make great use of authentic instruction. Students are engaged in sustained, disciplined, and critical thought through a variety of instructional approaches, such as independent study, project-based learning, and real-world problem solving.

And yet, four of the six teachers interviewed responded that the teachers' expectations do not match that of the curriculum taught.

The conclusions arrived at from the interviews conducted with the three administrators did not surprise this researcher. All three administrators in every category except one supported the literature findings.

### Recommendations for Administrators

The following recommendations are made to administrators based on the examination of the results of this study. The findings of this study were drawn from twelve research questions asked of six teachers; two from three different small high schools and three administrators from three different high schools.

#### *Recommendation 1.*

Question three asked what type of extra and co curricular activities are the students involved in and what percent of the school participated. The recommendation comes from the responses made by both teachers and administrators in the area of the percent of students that participate. Several responses indicated that the students who had no form of transportation home after these activities ended were forced to leave on the school bus immediately after school. They could not participate. A recommendation would be for the school to either provide transportation to those students or help arrange

a system of carpooling. This would enable all the students who wished to participate the chance to do so.

### *Recommendation 2*

Question three also asked how many of the staff came to the extra curricular activities. The three principals interviewed stated that they would like a better percent of the staff, particularly the more seasoned staff, to attend. One recommendation would be to offer an incentive(s) to staff for their attendance at activities i.e.: counting toward their professional hours. Another suggestion could be to enable teachers to use "flex" time if their schedules permitted. If they did not have a class first period and had attended an event, they could use this time to their benefit and not sign into school until second period.

### *Recommendation 3.*

Part of question seven asked subjects to respond to whether or not the teachers' expectations matched that of the college preparatory curriculum. Four out of six teachers stated that the expectations did not match. Two administrators stated that their teachers' expectations did not match. One recommendation might be to have a position on staff of Director of Curriculum. Part of this person's responsibilities would be to ensure the students that the staff is providing them with the best instruction possible. This would

include making sure that the teacher's have the same rigorous expectations as the curriculum.

Another suggestion would be to make sure the teachers, as per Diocesan guidelines, are attending in-services sponsored by their districts, especially those offered by the Diocesan Education Office.

Yet another suggestion in this area is to be sure that all teachers are knowledgeable in the content area they teach. One place to start is with the districts' curriculum guides. These will give the staff the level of content and expectations that the students should be reaching. Some teachers indicated that they were rewriting the curriculum. In this case all curriculums should be reviewed and approved by the Diocesan Education Office.

One last recommendation might be for administrators to be sure they are following the evaluation process of their districts to ensure proper teacher performance. In the case of the administrators interviewed in this study, the process would be that of the guidelines set down by the Diocesan Education Office.

#### *Recommendation 4.*

Research question ten was composed of three parts. The last part asked the subjects to state whether or not they had any input on the budget process. Four of the six teachers flatly said no. Two said they knew how much they had to spend. One administrator said the staff had no input while one stated that if approached by a teacher

on this matter, the money would be given as long as it was being spent for a good purpose.

One recommendation is to provide the staff input in the budget process. The staff could be asked to create a budget for their department for the year indicating what they would like to purchase, the cost, and the reason for purchasing it. Discussions could then ensue with the administration if questions were raised. This would involve the staff even more in the decision-making process.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

Further research is recommended because of the important implications of the results of this study.

##### *Recommendation 1.*

The findings of this study were limited to professionals in a small number of Diocesan Catholic Schools. It is recommended that further studies be drawn from a larger number of schools possibly including public schools.

##### *Recommendation 2.*

The findings of this study were limited to the perceptions of administrators and teachers of school culture. It is recommended that further studies be drawn from the perceptions of the total, overall small school environment.

*Recommendation 3.*

The findings of this study were limited to responses given by a total of nine subjects. It is recommended that further studies be conducted using a larger number of respondents.

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